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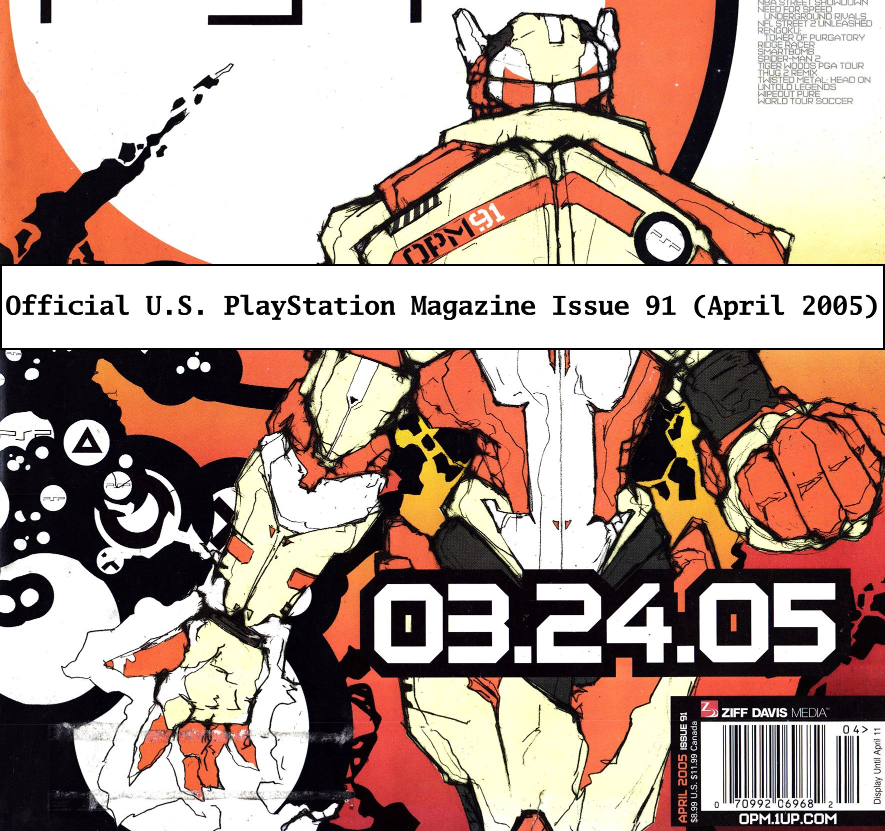

»PSP LAUNCH LINEUP

APE ESCAPE:
  ON THE LOOSE
ATV OFFROAD FURY:
  BLAZIN' TRAILS
DARKSTALKERS
  CHRONICLE:
  THE CHAOS TOWER
DYNASTY WARRIORS
FIFA 2005
GRETZKY NHL
LUMINES
METAL GEAR ACID
MLB
MVP BASEBALL
NBA
NBA STREET SHOWDOWN
NEED FOR SPEED
  UNDERGROUND RIVALS
NFL STREET 2 UNLEASHED
RENGOKU:
  TOWER OF PURGATORY
RIDGE RACER
SMARTBOMB
SPIDER-MAN 2
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR
THUG 2 REMIX
TWISTED METAL: HEAD ON
UNTOLD LEGENDS
WIPEOUT PURE
WORLD TOUR SOCCER

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03.24.05

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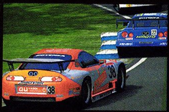
PlayStation 2



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PUSHING THE EDGE
IS NEVER FAR ENOUGH

PROJECT: SNOWBLIND™

01 FLSH
05
New English Text
Reloading
01 RIOT
100
05 FRAG
15 210

"Unprecedented stream of battlefield chaos"
- *Play*

"Sheer graphical beauty"
- *OPM*

"Unabashed balls-to-the-wall action"
- *XBN*

"All those weapons mean the possibilities are up to your imagination"
- *Electronic Gaming Monthly*

"The Future of War"
- *Game Informer*

"Multiplayer shines in Snowblind"
- *PSM*

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

BLOOD
VIOLENCE

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PlayStation®2

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TEEN
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Blood and Gore
Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

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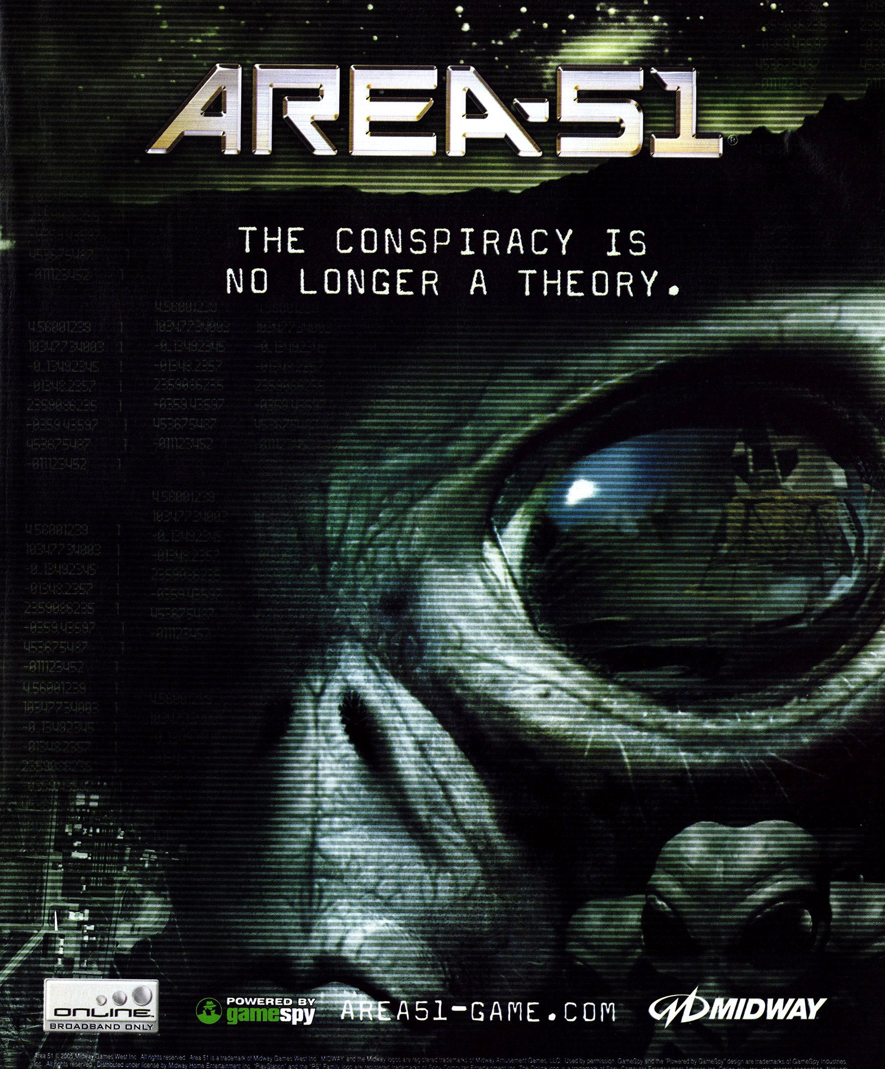
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PlayStation
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PSP
03.24.05

COVER STORY PSP

80

CONTENTS

INPUT

18 INPUT
Everyone who has 10 fingers, raise your hand! Now everyone who has 10 fingers, use them to write us at opm@ziffdavis.com!

HYPE

22 SPORTSCENTER
Game companies continue their draft picks.
32 CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS
Dracula rides again, but his victims are new.
34 KILLER 7
We're still not sure what it's about, but we know it makes us feel dirty inside.
38 WAR ALL THE TIME
Put on your uniform—Ubisoft is headed to the battlefield with *Brothers in Arms*, *Rainbow Six: Lockdown*, and *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*.
46 DRIVE ON BY
Enthusia is for drivers with patience; *Midnight Club 3* is for drivers with rage.
54 DEATH, JR.
The Grim Reaper's progeny may be the funniest thing to hit your PSP.
64 SPANDEX LOVE
All the cool kids have alter egos, just like their buddies Batman, Hulk, and the Fantastic Four.
74 ANIMANIA
Astro Boy gives your DVD player some lovin'.
76 BY THE NUMBERS
The page that counts.

REVIEWS

98 Gran Turismo 4
102 Finny the Fish & the Seven Waters
102 Kessen III
102 Musashi Samurai Legend
103 Playboy: The Mansion
106 TimeSplitters: Future Perfect
109 FIFA Street
109 World Tour Soccer 2006
110 Major League Baseball 2K5
110 MLB 2006
110 MVP Baseball 2005
112 Project: Snowblind
114 Fight Night Round 2
114 MX vs. ATV Unleashed
114 Rugby 2005
116 Devil May Cry 3
118 DVDs

REPLAY

122 PSPREDECESSORS
The handhelds that paved the way.
126 MERCENARIES
Play as Han Solo.
128 GOOD, BAD, UGLY: FPS GAMES
Games you should shoot in virtually, and games you should literally shoot.
129 REVIEWS ARCHIVE
Every PS2 game rated.
130 CHAMPIONS: RETURN TO ARMS
Get the best weapon in the whole game.
134 BEHIND THE GAME: WIPEOUT
The story of one of PlayStation's seminal games.

MATTEL ELECTRONICS
Auto Race
MATTEL ELECTRONICS
AUTO RACE

122

REWIND

138 FIVE YEARS AGO...
There were a lot of darn good games.

GAMES COVERED INSIDE

PS2

116	Arc the Lad: End of Darkness
64	Batman Begins
39	Brothers in Arms: Road to Hill 30
32	Castlevania: Curse of Darkness
130	Champions: Return to Arms
116	Devil May Cry 3
46	Enthusia
68	Fantastic Four
109	FIFA Street
114	Fight Night Round 2
102	Finny the Fish & the Seven Waters
98	Gran Turismo 4
66	The Incredible Hulk: Critical Mass
102	Kessen III
34	Killer 7
110	Major League Baseball 2K5
126	Mercenaries
50	Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition
110	MLB 2006
102	Musashi Samurai Legend
110	MVP Baseball 2005
114	MX vs. ATV Unleashed
103	Playboy: The Mansion
112	Project: Snowblind
38	Rainbow Six: Lockdown
114	Rugby 2005
41	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory
106	TimeSplitters: Future Perfect
109	World Tour Soccer 2006

PSP

56	Advent Shadow
59	Colin McRae Rally 2005
54	Death, Jr.
59	Frogger
59	Grand Theft Auto
56	Infected
59	Lumines
59	Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition
59	Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory
59	TOCA Race Driver 2
58	Untold Legends: Brotherhood of the Blade

Devil May Cry 3
116

Wipeout
134

FIFA Street
109

Batman Begins
64

Playboy: The Mansion
103

Death, Jr.
54

Splinter Cell
41

Enthusia
46

Killer 7
34

Baseball Roundup
110

80

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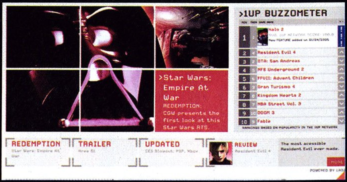
>1UP BUZZOMETER

1 Halo 2
2 Resident Evil 4
3 GTA: San Andreas
4 NFS Underground 2
5 FFVII: Advent Children
6 Gran Turismo 4
7 Kingdom Hearts 2
8 NBA Street Vol. 3
9 DOOM 3
10 Fable

RANKINGS BASED ON POPULARITY IN THE 1UP NETWORK

>Star Wars: Empire At War
REDEMPTION: CGW presents the first look at this Star Wars RTS.

REDEMPTION Star Wars: Empire At War
TRAILER Area 51
UPDATED CES Blowout: PSP, Xbox
REVIEW Resident Evil 4
The most acessible Resident Evil ever made.

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PSP.1UP.COM
The launch countdown continues. Stay tuned to 1UP.com for all of your up-to-the-minute PSP info, including launch games, launch movies, and pictures of people standing in lines on March 23.

PS2.1UP.COM
Stressed out because a game is coming out and you have yet to see *OPM*'s review? Stress no more—up-to-the-minute reviews are always available here.

BOARDS.1UP.COM
If you're always losing arguments, then you've been hanging out in the wrong place—here you can always find someone to agree with you, no matter how unpopular your opinion might be.

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Country clubs have exorbitant membership fees. Some of them can cost more than $200,000 per year, and that doesn't even include your bar tab! However, the clubs on 1UP.com are completely free—well, except for your beverages.

FEATURED CLUB
KILLFOPSP-CLUB.1UP.COM
We don't really endorse the Kill for PSP club, but we do think it's a good idea to be friendly with its members so that you don't end up as one of their targets....

WELCOME...

TO THE PSP GENERATION—COVER CHARGE $249.99

We love the PSP, and so will you. Even at the higher-than-expected price, you'll be among the first to buy it. The PSP is simply awesome, as is its game roster. When Sony's Kaz Hirai spoke to us for Giancarlo's cover story (the fun starts on page 80), he was guarded in speculating how the PSP would perform sales-wise. He reminded us that the system hasn't even shipped yet, so it's difficult to know exactly how it will do.

Well, Kaz, allow us some speculation of our own: The PSP will breeze through the first million units; PSP game quality and Wi-Fi alone will change gaming in ways we haven't even thought of, not to mention its power as a movie and music player. There will be a PSP2 and a PSP3 and so on. Welcome to the start of the PSP generation.

What's that? Oh, right—I'm the new editor-in-chief of *OPM*, taking the reins from John Davison, who is still with us, but in a bigger position in which he will wield his enormous powers for the betterment of all the great gaming stuff Ziff Davis does. Good for him and good for us. « *Tom Byron*

THE OPM FAMILY

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DANA JONGEWAARD has been dreaming nightly about the PSP since she preordered it. She also dreams that she has children who she forgets and leaves alone for weeks at a time. We don't know exactly what that means, but we wouldn't recommend her for baby-sitting.

JOE RYBICKI really did grow up in a funeral home, as mentioned in his *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect* review. And he really did build a *TimeSplitters* map based on the funeral home's layout. Look for maps by "joePM" online and you too can experience part of his childhood.

THIERRY NGUYEN keeps on hearing about all sorts of neat tricks you can do with the PSP. But besides using it to play *Lumines* and watch *Deuce Bigalow*, he also wants to read comics on it. No one bothered to tell him that you have to scan the pages and turn them into JPEG files first.

GIANCARLO VARANINI is still amazed that the PSP can do so much. He only wishes that it could manufacture a pancake of some sort or perhaps make a grilled cheese sandwich on command. Oh well—maybe the PSP2 will be able to accomplish such feats.

LOGAN PARR wants to know what it means when one of the birds he is pet-sitting for lets out an evil laugh and says, "It won't make any difference." This has scared him off ever wanting birds as pets, watching Hitchcock's *The Birds*...or closing his eyes ever again.

RYAN VULK would like to dedicate his hard work drawing the cover and laying out 84.52779 percent of the issue to this lovely pouch of mayonnaise. His dreams of slathering it all over slices of bread and preserved meats are what kept him going. Huzzah for the greatness of mayo!

ALEJANDRO CHAVETTA has officially been broken, thanks to his efforts to glean the terrible, wondrous secrets of *Killer 7*. Now he claims that his stab wound houses the disembodied voice of economist John Nash, and wants you to know that the kids are, indeed, alright.

TODD ZUNIGA is now a certified adult, at the no-longer-considered-ripe age of 30. He celebrated his entry into the world of stress, impending crises, and disdain for "youth" by going all-out at the IHOP in Cheyenne, Wyoming. If you weren't there, well, that was your problem, you square.

ZOE FLOWER is a longtime columnist who prides herself on blowing deadlines. She is no longer allowed in the *OPM* offices after some "inappropriate" behavior with a *God of War* window display. She loves Greek mythology and Greek food and food in general. Especially cheese. Mmmmm...cheese.

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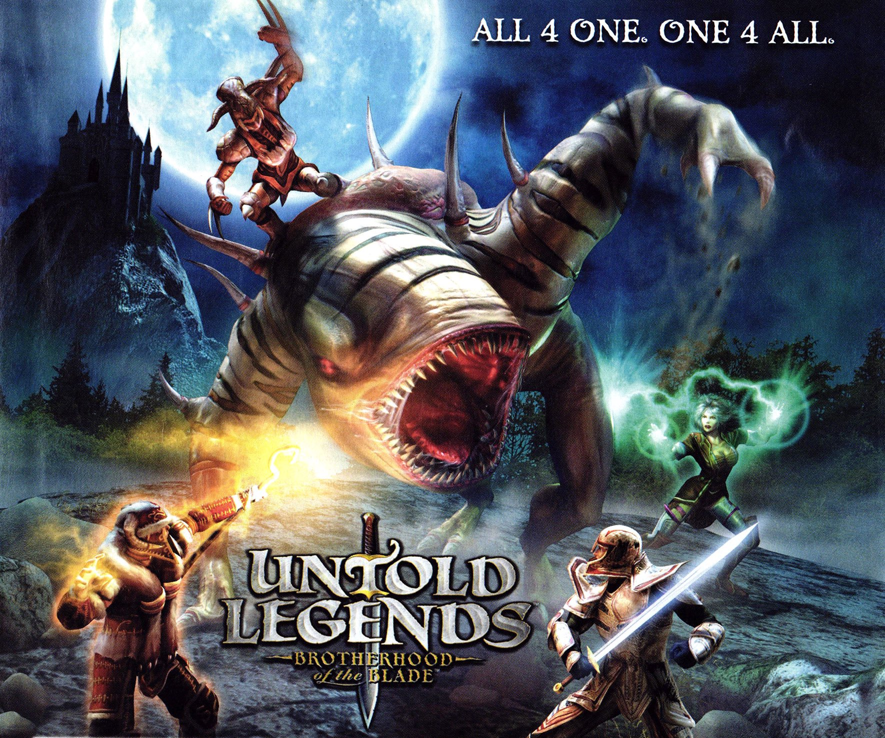

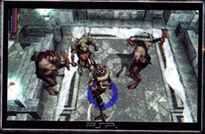

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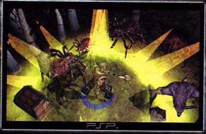
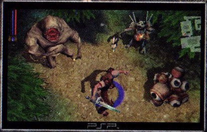
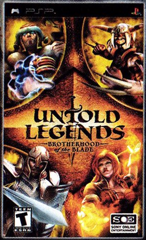
Wield your blade and cast powerful spells in this action-packed, hack 'n' slash RPG.



Wireless Multiplayer Gameplay
Connect directly to other PSP handheld systems and play with your friends.



Original Fantasy Adventure
Battle powerful creatures and save the city of Aven to unravel the mysteries of an ancient planet.



***Untold Legends™: Brotherhood of the Blade™* is classic RPG action available at launch for the PSP™ handheld entertainment system. Choose from among four unique character classes and journey to the fantasy world of Aven to battle powerful creatures and unravel the mysteries of an ancient planet. Experience on-the-go hack 'n' slash combat or join cooperative multiplayer battles via wireless gameplay as you venture through beautiful 3D environments and discover rich treasures in this completely original fantasy adventure.**

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PLAY IT

ALSO CHECK OUT
Videos about *Full Spectrum Warrior* for PS2, neat downloads for *Shrek 2*, and a lesson from Lanea Lyden on fighting Mister Black (in *Red Dead Revolver*.

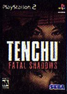
ENTHUSIA

Never has turning left for a few minutes been harder than in this game. If you're a total car nerd, you probably will go nuts with the demo cars and tracks.

PlayStation 2
COLD WINTER

COLD WINTER

The closest you'll get to visiting a prison full of cranky Chinese guards, this shooter demo also features the ability to use common baskets as bullet sponges!



TENCHU

Girl ninjas (aka *kunoichi*) are pretty hot (at least to us troglodytes on staff). You can now enact our, er, your bizarre fetish for women cutting things!

PlayStation 2
Shining Tears
SEGA

SHINING TEARS

This is basically a Japanese buddy flick where two misfits end up saving the world. If you don't have a buddy, your other thumb will have to substitute.

WATCH IT

HOOK UP!
No, not that kinda hookup, but one where amateur athletes show their stuff

PlayStation 2
KESSEN III

KESSEN III

If you ever wondered what *Braveheart* would look like if the whole battlefield was covered with samurai instead of Scots, well, here you go.

The Godfather

THE GODFATHER

This is perhaps the best movie ever made. Now it's more polygonal and bump-mapped! Zounds! How can you refuse such an offer from the trailer?!?

PlayStation 2
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3
DUB edition

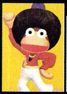
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3

Read about how "real big" the cars and their rims and their spoilers and their everything are. Then sit back and watch the excess in this video.

PlayStation 2
SNOWBLIND

PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

Think about what might have happened if the Rangers in *Black Hawk Down* had had superpowers. That doesn't happen in this video, but it's close.



APE ESCAPE PSP

We all love primates here! If you don't like apes, then maybe this video featuring portable apes will convince you that apes are the new monkeys.

PlayStation 2
GOD OF WAR

GOD OF WAR

We won't fault SCEA for making a Spartan look like a Celtic barbarian—simply because the action in this video reeks of god smacking and man rage.

PLAYSTATION UNDERGROUND TEAM

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SPECIAL THANKS
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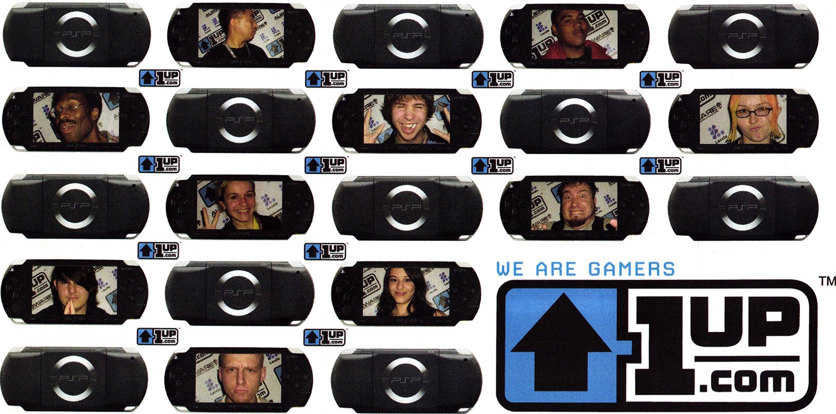
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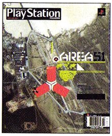
INPUT

HIT US WITH YOUR BEST SHOT



LETTER OF THE MONTH

I have come to the conclusion that relationships play out a lot like a game of *Guilty Gear*. See, up until about a week ago or so I was with this one girl, but it had seemed her last challenger got the high score after only a week of gameplay. I, on the other hand, was trying to get the unlockable by putting some hard work into the game. Well, after hearing [about her last challenger], I kinda pulled a special and the relationship was "DESTROYED." Besides, things were already rocky. Every time we'd be in a match, she'd build up the tension gauge and then Roman-cancel all of a sudden and want to talk. I mean, the relationship had more drama than story mode. So it looks like I'm done with versus mode for awhile and will stick to arcade and await the next challenger. If all this sounds strange and rather creepy...you are right. Even more so if you've never played the *Guilty Gear* games. Perhaps I should find something better to do with my time...like search out that new challenger. Maybe she'll be like Justice, but the thing is, fighting Justice is so one-sided that it would kinda be like S&M...and since I'm not Testament, I wouldn't really be into that. No Bridgets or Venoms either. Not into that kinda stuff. Well, that's about it. Oh, but remember...the key to great sex is Punch + Kick + Heavy Slash + Slash, quarter circle forward, quarter circle forward—always guaranteed to finish 'em off.

Beni DuBois
via e-mail

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GREAT BALLS OF VINYL

Hey *OPM*, I have been deeply touched by your demo of *Katamari Damacy*—so much so that I play it all night and have the music stuck in my head all day. I even made my own Katamari at work. I work at a Volkswagen dealership, and the brand-new cars come with a vinyl film around them. The amount of film varies from car to car, but if you wrap it into a ball, it's about the size of a cat. It took a while, but the ball I made was about 5 feet tall.

Anonymous
via scarily handwritten fax

This is seriously one of the coolest things we've ever heard. If only No-name here had enclosed a picture. If anyone else has gotten into the homemade Katamari scene, send us pictures and we might just print them. Remember, though, not to harm any pets or siblings in the making of your enormous balls of miscellaneous stuff.

BOX SET

Are Americans just not cultured enough to handle the box art found in foreign lands? Perhaps politically we don't make the best decisions, but we are good at entertainment (I know we aren't quite on top of the porn industry—France has that covered—but we're close) and wasting countless hours in front of the television. As an artist myself, I find the "dumbed-down" covers kind of insulting. People are inadvertently drawn to bright, flashy things. Japanese culture proves this, as does the huge need for jewelry on women. It would make more sense to just change the language on the cover and leave the pretty box art.

Conrad Grossman
via e-mail

EA + NFL + ESPN = ANGRY GAMERS

Shame on you, NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue [for signing an exclusivity deal with EA Sports]. I switched from *Madden* to the *2K*

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARDS

PSP MADNESS

With the news of PSP's launch date and pricing hitting the streets just before we went to press, our friends on the *OPM* message boards had plenty to say about the system's pricing and launch lineup.

"That's $300 Canadian. To me that seems like too much money," said **FinalFantasy-Ruler88**.

"You have to consider what you are getting with it," replied **bizsumpark182**. "It's not as bad as you're making it out to be. And after a couple of months or so, I'm sure that they will come out with a package with just the system."

"If I were to be getting a PSP, which I'm not," said c_strife97, "I'd be interested in *Lumines* and *Untold Legends*. There's too many console rehashes in the [launch] list."

"What's wrong with a console rehash?" asked **DatMonkey**. "That's the main reason I want a PSP, so that I can play the PS2 games I dig on the go. I think it would kick ass to be able to play *Tony Hawk* or *Devil May Cry* on the train—especially since I haven't touched these games on my PS2 in a LONG time."

LONG LIVE PS2

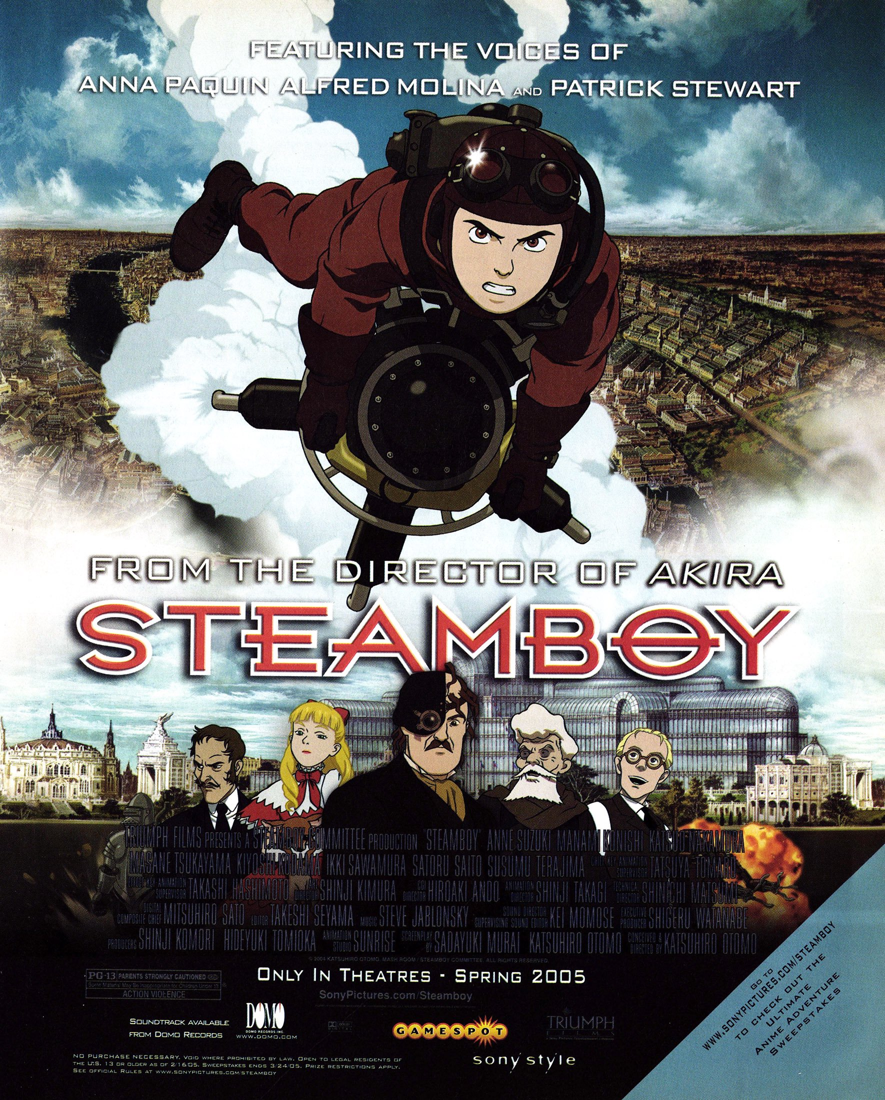
Meanwhile, other folks are trying to live in the moment.

"There are all these murmurings about new systems and how awesome they will all be," mused **unusualgroove36**, "and I have no doubt that they will be, but I still have so much to play on my PS2, Xbox, and even the GameCube. I mean, come on—I'm still playing *Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando*, and I haven't even played *Jak II* yet."

"I'm not ready yet," cried **only-1-mac**. "I feel like I just got my PS2 and I'm still having a blast with it. I'll probably wait a year to buy one of [the new systems], because by then the kinks will hopefully be ironed out."

"I'm tired of the PS2 and this generation of consoles," retorted **Syphon_Filter_H11**. "I already want better graphics, bigger cities, more cars, bigger adventures, and so on. I want consoles to be able to run thousands of players on one screen without even breaking a sweat. I want 10,000 cars and 500 tracks in a *Gran Turismo* game, and I want 1,000-plus hours of play time on a *Grand Theft Auto*. I want MORE, dammit!"

"Are we supposed to be done with [PS2]?" asked **luccia**. "I figure we've got a good year [left] at least. If we're supposed to be done already, I'm in serious trouble with this ever growing pile of games over here. Let's not count our chickens before they're hatched, people."



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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF *AKIRA*

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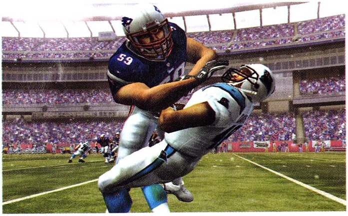

CORRECTION

In last month's review of *NBA Street V3*, the final score should have been 4.5 out of 5. The dirty magazine gnomes left out a blarg. You'll find it corrected in this month's Replay.

series in 2003 and never looked back. I know I'm in the minority, what with all the *Madden* lovers, but I just liked Sega's game better. I found that Sega did a better job on the running game than EA did in *Madden*. Plus, you get Chris Berman (although *ESPN*'s commentating crew is horrible, especially compared to Madden and Michaels). Regardless, there's no way that such a solid game should be forced off the market. Competition makes for better games, and the NFL, of all leagues, should be aware of that.

Clayton
via e-mail

It's clear where EA's priorities lie: Rather than devoting all that cash to product and game development to make a better game for fans, it uses it to squash out the competition. I try to imagine a football game with fake teams and numbers for players' names. Since that will never happen, there will be no other choice but the EA franchise in the future. I am outraged. If this is the future of the videogame industry, there won't be anything left worth spending my money on, and that makes me very sad.

Rebecca Carlson
via e-mail

This is a sad day for every sports gamer around the world. If EA improved *Madden* only incrementally each year in the face of competition, what will the company do now that it has completely eliminated the competition? Competition breeds innovation, and that's what we have lost with the moves made in January by EA. Maddenites (of which I am one), congratulations: You can finally say that *Madden* is the only game to have!

Joe Dennis
via e-mail

These letters are just the tip of a very angry iceberg. Does no one see anything positive in this move? If so, send us an e-mail and tell us why.

COSPLAY BIRTHDAY

For the last several years, I've always had a big all-night party at my house for my birthday. And while each year is very entertaining, my friends and I decided to be a little different and actually have a theme. So, inspired by the gamers' holiday created by the web comic *Ctrl+Alt+Del*, we celebrated in the spirit of "Winter-een-mas" by paying homage to videogames and gaming. How, you ask? Well, for starters, we engaged in rounds of flame tag in *Time-Splitters 2* and flailed around in front of the television playing *AntiGrav*. But some of us took it a bit further and decided to express our love for gaming by dressing as characters from some of our favorite games (we had prizes for the best costumes, so that helped, too). Here's a picture of us dressed as characters from *SOCOM*, *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Prince of Tennis*, *Naruto*, *Final Fantasy*, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, and *Vice City*.

Deidre I.
via e-mail

A HUNK OF BURNING LOVE

I recently read your Editor Awards article in Issue #89. As I read through it, I agreed with all your choices until I got to the Game of the Year award. My first though was, "Are these guys out of their minds?" Then I realized that you were absolutely right. *San Andreas* is a near-flawless game, with awesome graphics and the whole works. But *Burnout 3* greatly surpasses it in one department: It's *fun*! It's a great arcade racer that breaks away from the annoying realism of most recent racers, and it has so much to collect and unlock that it will keep you playing for hours on end. And because of that, to me it is the best game of 2004, and anyone who doesn't own it needs to get it NOW!

Greg Brousseau
via e-mail

BREAK OUT

Since *Resident Evil Outbreak File #2* is coming out after *Resident Evil 4*, I was wondering if it will have the good gameplay like *Resident Evil 4* or the same old crap controls and camera angles like the first *Resident Evil Outbreak*?

Name withheld
via e-mail

Check back next month for the review, but it's looking more like the first *Outbreak* than *RE4*. «

ASK US ANYTHING
AND WE'LL ANSWER

APPLES AND ORANGES

Q I'm as psyched as anyone else to get a PSP, but while a lot has been written about the multimedia capabilities of the thing, I was wondering how it was going to work for those of us who use Macs instead of PCs. Will we still be able to put MP3s or mpgs onto our PSPs by linking it with our Macs, or will we be s*** out of luck?

Chris Eades
vie e-mail

A Sony has yet to reveal the U.S. PC-to-PSP interface, but just in case it doesn't include Mac support, there's already third-party software out there that backs up your saves, syncs with iPhoto and iTunes, and converts video. You can check it out here: www.kaisakura.com/iPSP.

LET FREEDOM RING

Q I was wondering if there was going to be a *Freedom Fighters* sequel, because I loved the game and beat it about six times.

Kelly Frischmann
via e-mail

A An EA spokesman says he hadn't heard anything about plans for a sequel. However, IO Interactive, developer of the first game, is currently hiring for several programming, art, and game-design positions, and most postings list multiplayer online experience as a requirement. Hmm....

HAPPY EASTER

Q What's an Easter egg?

Alex Rosario
via e-mail

A An Easter egg is a hidden feature or object in a game that has no practical value. For example, in *MGS3*, if you hit R1 during the intro cinematic, the singer will whisper "Snake eater." According to www.urbandictionary.com, its usage in reference to hidden items in art and entertainment "originates from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, when the cast had an Easter egg hunt but most of the eggs went unfound. They can be seen throughout the film in various locations (such as under Frank N. Furter's throne)."

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BLOG OF THE MONTH

"What in God's name is [*House of the Dead* and *Alone in the Dark* director] Uwe Boll doing? The man is an avid gamer and he claims he's dead serious about bringing videogame franchises to the big screen. So why is it that thus far, he's actually done more harm than good for videogame fans?

Look, I'm not looking for a masterpiece of a film. I'm not looking for a film that's going to be nominated for 15 billion Oscars. I'm not even looking for a film that's driven by unquestionable star power. I just want a film that would make me proud as a videogame fan; something that would give the non-videogame-playing average Joes and Janes of the world the same type of "euphoria" that we as game players experience when we play our games. Up to this point, the videogame-based movies out there have only made it embarrassing to be a fan and game player."

Jeffrey C
nycjeff.1UP.com

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INSIDE

31 **CALENDAR**
Thirty-one days of PS2 madness at your fingertips

32 **CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS**
It's back to Dracula's castle, but this time there's a new cast

34 **KILLER 7**
A game that makes even Scooter uncomfortable.

38 **REGISTER FOR THE DRAFT**
Or just stay home and go to war with Ubisoft

46 **ENTHUSIA**
A racing game for skilled drivers with patience

50 **MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION**
For those who are not patient, driving of a different sort

54 **DEATH JR.**
Levity comes in the form of an adolescent skeleton

SPORTSCENTER

THE SPORTS-EXCLUSIVITY LICENSING WARS CONTINUE

Lately, the sports-gaming business has been looking more like a boxing scorecard than a set of business moves.

ROUND 1: EA lands a haymaker by signing the National Football League (NFL) to an exclusive five-year deal.

ROUND 2: EA drops below the belt, soaking up the last worthwhile football license, signing a pact with the Arena Football League (AFL).

ROUND 3: With the competition on the ropes, EA follows up with a near knockout blow, wrapping up the ESPN license for, wow, 15 years.

ROUND 4: Take-Two counterpunches its way back into the competition with a serious one-two-three volley, signing a third-party exclusivity deal with the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA), Major League Baseball Properties (MLBP), and Major League Baseball Advanced Media (MLBAM) for seven years.

While the bell hasn't rung for Round 5 just yet, things are changing on a daily basis, and it's likely that deals are currently in the works for both the NBA and NHL.

Here's a blow-by-blow recap....

ROUND 1

MADDEN: THE ONLY (NFL) GAME IN TOWN

While the EA/NFL deal was the gaming equivalent of the shot heard round the world—where were you when the deal went down?—ultimately the highest rated, most respected, and best marketed NFL series won out, with *Madden* scoring full control of the sport for the next five seasons.

Even though this move made EA seem like the ultimate money-powered, bullying villain, it's inarguably good business. EA's hand was even, in a sense, forced by 2K's aggressive pricing strategy to gain market share—i.e., its $20 sports games. Financial analysts insist Sega's pricing was likely only a one-year scheme, mind you, as it is largely considered bad for the industry.

"I think what we learned is there's a great demand for a low-priced product out there," says Todd Sitrin, EA Tiburon's VP of marketing. "There were a lot of consumers that had never purchased any football game regardless, [who] all of a sudden came out when there was a low-priced product."

Even after dropping the price to rock bottom, *NFL 2K5* still only garnered 40 percent of the market share (a significant leap, but not a financial success). *Madden* was dominant then and will stay that way.

ROUND 2

THE AFL: WHO FREAKIN' CARES?

When EA signed on with the AFL, it garnered press similar to what you'd expect at a public nose-picking session: The only interested parties were *NFL 2K5* fans hoping for a license to keep the franchise on life support. They felt that cutting out the competition in such a predatory manner was one of the most contemptible strokes of EA's money-making masterpiece. According to Sitrin, they had it wrong.

"The AFL came to us more than a year ago and started talking to us about doing a game," Sitrin says. "The Arena Football League is an interesting situation: They've been around 19 years. But just in the last few years, they've experienced rapid growth in their league because of their deal with NBC [which broadcasts games every week]. They wanted to work with us because of the strength of the EA Sports brand, so we could bring their game to life in a videogame format. It's a deal we discussed for a long, long time. As for the timing, it's complete coincidence that the deal got done when it did."

ROUND 3

ESPN: THE WORLDWIDE LEADER IS SELLING OFF TO HIGHEST BIDDER

The deal that ESPN signed with EA was significant for two major reasons: 1) It lasts for 15 years. Fifteen! 2) It strips another piece away from 2K Games' dwindling uniform, as its three-year agreement with ESPN has almost expired.

The deal, an absolute whopper, calls for EA to pay ESPN a minimum of $850 million in cash and advertising commitments, according to an estimate in *The Wall Street Journal*. Like with the AFL deal, EA didn't do the approaching; rather, it just emptied the coffers.

> EA DIDN'T DO THE APPROACHING; IT JUST EMPTIED THE COFFERS.

"Throughout the years, we have had a number of conversations with EA, which is a big marketing customer of ours," says John Skipper, ESPN's executive vice president for advertising sales, new media, and consumer products. "Our current agreement with Sega runs out at the end of this year, and we were looking to decide what our next agreement would be. Our deal with EA came together fairly quickly."

Why did ESPN abandon Take-Two? "We had a very good working relationship with [Take-Two]," Skipper told *The Wall Street Journal*. "But the power of Electronic Arts' brand was hard to resist. When you think about brands that should be together and work together, I think EA represents in videogames what ESPN represents in broadcasting and media assets."

The actual reasons for ESPN to switch teams seem to be threefold.

First, ESPN wanted the promise of more money, and Take-Two's budget pricing meant fewer dollars at retail, fewer dollars in the licensor's bank account, and less capital to afford the license. It's ironic, really. 2K Games lowered the price of its franchise to gain market share, which was

IN WITH 2K, OUT WITH SEGA

THE END OF AN ERA

When Take-Two purchased Visual Concepts from Sega for $24 million in January, it signaled the end of Sega Sports as we know it and the beginning of Take-Two's sports brand, 2K Games. This move, along with its MLB deal, announced that Take-Two will still challenge EA's sports titles.

"We view the acquisition of Visual Concepts as a significant positive for Take-Two," TerraNova Institutional analyst Boris Markovich says. "Visual Concepts has historically excelled by delivering some of the highest rated sports titles in the industry."

Paul Eibeler, Take-Two's president, followed up, saying, "With the acquisition of Visual Concepts and Kush Games and their sports-game development capabilities, we'll continue to aggressively pursue our strategy to gain market share with our 2K sports titles."

Sega, on the other hand, didn't feel like sports were profitable enough anymore. "The ESPN Videogames line has not been a key profit driver in the North American market for Sega," explains Naoya Tsurumi, CEO of Sega of America. While Sega might publish a tennis or soccer title in the future, its ties to major American sports are severed.

HISTORY OF SEGA SPORTS

Sega Sports splashed on the scene back in 1993 (although it stopped using that moniker in 2003). This January, Sega's sports arm all but shut down when it sold Visual Concepts to Take-Two. We take a look back at some key Sega Sports moments.

1993
JOE MONTANA'S NFL FOOTBALL
An early Sega CD release that featured all 28 NFL teams and live, unintentionally funny clips of Montana.

1994
WORLD SERIES BASEBALL
This Genesis game had 28 teams, real players, and a 162-game season—everything but the players' strike.

1996
NBA ACTION
This Saturn title—the developer's first foray into the NBA—featured NBA teams, players, and Marv Albert yapping away.

1999
SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K
This Dreamcast launch title, developed by Visual Concepts, was the first football game to run at 60 frames per second.

2000
SEGA SPORTS VIRTUA TENNIS
A direct arcade port to Dreamcast, this blockbuster featured real players and great tennis; it's still regarded by many gamers as the best tennis game out there.

2002
SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K2
The multiplatform debut for Visual Concepts, which featured online play for the second straight year.

2003
SEGA SPORTS WORLD SERIES BASEBALL 2K3
The last of the Sega Sports–labeled titles. After this, titles were published under Sega and were labeled with ESPN.

2004
ESPN COLLEGE HOOPS 2K5
The last ESPN-licensed game by Sega's sports division.

effective, but then when its game peaked in popularity and was in a position to make money, ESPN walked because 2K couldn't afford the license.

Second, money talks: EA dropped a massive bag full of money to lure ESPN to its side.

And third, EA has the NFL. Skipper tells *OPM*, "The EA/NFL five-year deal did not impact what ESPN decided to do. We would have done the deal whether or not the NFL deal had transpired." However, at the same time, he also admitted to the *New York Post*, "We're happy to be in partnership with the company that has the NFL rights."

The ESPN integration, set to premiere in EA Sports' 2006 titles, won't be used in the same way the 2K franchises used it. "EA Sports will be the leading brand on all of our existing sports franchises," says EA spokesperson Trudy Muller, who says none of the current titles will change, either.

So what will you see in terms of content from ESPN? The integration will consist of announcers, stats, design, graphics, branding, and goods from ESPN telecasts and archives. "The agreement also allows EA and ESPN to develop new games based on ESPN sports and programming," says Muller. "We're not announcing specific titles now, but properties like poker and the X Games could be considered."

There's also speculation that the license would allow for less-expected ESPN ventures turned games—that means that not only might you see a World Series of Poker game, but it's possible you could also see a game based on the poker-themed show *Tilt*.

A company can do a lot in 15 years, but with the rapidly changing gaming landscape—15 years from now would conceivably see us in PS5 territory—why was such a lengthy deal agreed upon?

"This is a long-term commitment by both EA and ESPN to really integrate each other's content for a sports fan's dream come true," Muller says. "By having a longer deal, we can integrate ESPN content and programming deeper into our games both this generation and for hardware generation cycles to come. It allows us to work creatively without worrying about the deal needing to be renegotiated in a year or two."

Take-Two says it still believes it can publish compelling sports games without ESPN, adding, "We wish ESPN the best of luck in their future relationship."

Analysts argue this is a killer blow by EA. William Lennan, a WR Hambrecht analyst, told *The New York Times*, "It's a slap. It's a slam dunk. Pick your sports metaphor. This makes it tougher for people already facing an uphill battle to compete."

But from a gamer's perspective, the ESPN license never matured into anything significant for 2K Games' franchises; it served as an underutilized coat of paint in almost every game. The announcing teams should be counted as 2K's biggest loss, but the NFL franchise didn't use ESPN announcers, and *NBA 2K5*'s announcing was reprehensibly bad. Only the *NHL 2K* franchise stands to significantly lose from the deal, because its announcing was so solid.

ROUND 4:

MLB: TAKE-TWO TAKES A SWING AT EA

Take-Two stepped up to the plate next and responded to EA's NFL, AFL, and ESPN deals by paying bushels of money for acronyms to call its own, wrapping up the MLBPA, MLBP, and MLBAM licenses. To break it down, MLBPA covers players and their likenesses, MLBP ("P" stands for "properties") covers pro and minor-league clubs and ballparks, and MLBAM ("AM" stands for "advanced media") covers MLB.com online content.

There are a couple curiosities with this deal, however, both of which make Take-Two out to be this off-season's New York Mets, who overpaid to lure ace free agents Pedro Martinez from the Red Sox and Carlos Beltran from the Astros.

The first curiosity is that Take-Two paid a whopping amount for third-party exclusivity. Industry execs suggest the company paid $250 million to $300 million for these rights, although Take-Two says that those reported estimates are grossly overstated. Jeff Brown, EA's VP of corporate communications, told GameSpot.com, "As far as we're concerned, this looks like stupid money. They are paying an exclusive price for a nonexclusive agreement."

While this brand of exclusivity has the definite whiff of a revenge deal aimed at hurting EA's bottom line, Take-Two feels like third-party exclusiv-

NO LICENSE? NO PROBLEM

There are a handful of sports games surviving on the market that haven't signed gazillion-dollar exclusivity deals. Here are a few and how they match up with the competition.

Hot Shots Golf Fore!
This arcadey golfer doesn't feature real players or real courses…just wacky cartoon characters with more personality than Vijay Singh.
●●●◐○
The competition:
Tiger Woods 2005 ●●●●◐

Blitz: Playmakers
The unlicensed *Playmakers* is sure to make an impact by going beyond the field of play. Drug addictions, fast women, faster cars. It's like the real-life NFL without the league restrictions.
Rating N/A
The competition:
NFL Street 2 ●●●●○

World Soccer Winning Eleven 8 International
WE8 features licenses from various leagues, but not the big daddy: the English Premiership. Still, it's considered one of the premier-playing games in all of sports.
●●●●◐
The competition:
FIFA 2005 ●●●●●

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PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

XBOX

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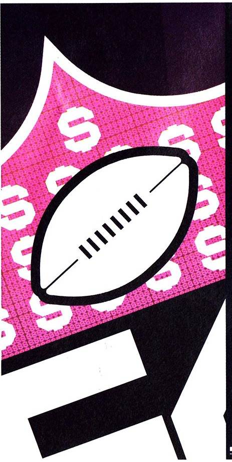

EA TALKS BACK

WHEN THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE

We condemned EA's partnership with the NFL last month because we feel exclusivity is bad for competition and for games. EA Tiburon's VP of marketing, Todd Sitrin, fires back, defending EA's integrity in this sit-down.

OPM Based on Sega Sports' $20 price point and consumer reaction, did EA think NFL exclusivity was a must?
Todd Sitrin The reality is that the NFL and the NFLPA decided to pursue it. In the end we felt it was the best thing for the relationship with the NFL and the best thing for us.

OPM Each *Madden* released in the past couple of years has topped the previous game. So where's the motivation on EA's side to say, "OK, it'll take five extra guys and $200,000 to implement this groundbreaking feature. Let's do it"?
TS Sega and Microsoft and Midway, those weren't our only competitors. We're competing with the *Gran Turismos*, the *Grand Theft Autos*. It's important for us to [offer] a better experience than any of those games. And frankly, we don't think the sports competition is going away. We already know that Midway is marketing an unlicensed football product [*Blitz: Playmakers*]. In the end, we're in competition with TV, with the Internet, with movies. We have to win those consumers back by having a quality, innovative product that pushes things further than they've ever been.

OPM A five-year deal is realistically a lifetime deal, isn't it? The resources won't be there for another company to build players, stadium models, etc., because of the costs.

"WE'RE IN COMPETITION WITH TV, WITH MOVIES."

TS I don't think so. The contract is a five-year deal. The type of technology that everyone's using can move from one type of product to another. If we don't live up to our expectations of the deal, the NFL and NFLPA have the option to go to someone else. There are a lot of powerful companies that have the resources to get back into the licensed products at that time. It's up to us to produce a high-quality game, otherwise when that time comes, maybe people will be searching for a new situation.

ity makes sense.

"We believe that competition and choice, especially with sports games, is of paramount importance for consumers," says James Ankner, director of corporate communications at Take-Two. "We believe this arrangement—allowing consumer choice while protecting our ability to make games—is a very smart business decision. Also, we value our relationship with our first-party partners so much that the MLB, MLBPA, and Take-Two didn't think it was appropriate to prevent our first-party partners from making games on their own platforms."

The second curiosity is Take-Two's devotion to a sport that ranks fourth in sales behind football, basketball, and extreme sports. In fact, the entire baseball-game market in 2004 clocked in about 2.5 million units sold, while *Madden* sold more than 3.2 million copies on PS2 alone.

"For Take-Two, this is an investment to participate in a segment that has been growing and has significantly more room to grow," says Ankner. "According to NPD Funworld, retail sales of interactive baseball titles grew 17 percent from 2003 to 2004, and over 50 percent from 2001 to 2004."

To take advantage of this growth, Take-Two plans to publish managerial and arcade-style games to complement its simulation release.

"The baseball videogame market has been underdeveloped, and 2K Sports has the product plan and talent to change that in next-generation videogame hardware," says John Olshan, the MLBPA's category director for interactive games. "For the first time, we will be positioned to take advantage of the entire baseball, hot-stove, and holiday seasons with an outstanding partner who is committed to giving baseball videogames the product development, marketing, and distribution required to bring sales in line with the immense popularity of Major League Baseball."

As for the competition, what's next for EA's *MVP Baseball* series? EA released this statement: "We will launch *MVP Baseball 2005* this spring—it's the highest rated and best selling baseball title in the market. We will continue to fight for market share this season. We are exploring our options longer term."

Some have suggested that EA's *MVP* team could make a console baseball game and then distribute it through Sony, Microsoft, or Nintendo in a co-branding situation. But that's a no-go. "These exclusives specify that all other third-party publishers and developers are precluded from publishing officially licensed MLB simulation-, arcade-, and manager-style games, either directly or in affiliation with a hardware manufacturer, during the length of the exclusives," Ankner says.

But still, that's quite a price to stay friendly with competitors, even if you are using their hardware. Considering the price of the deal, there's no chance that Take-Two will be selling its baseball title for $20; exclusivity of any kind needs to be paid for. EA made around $60 million from its baseball games last year, and that money is now up for grabs—Take-Two will be the primary beneficiary, though Sony and Nintendo will also share in the market.

ANALYSTS ARGUE THE ESPN DEAL IS A KILLER BLOW BY EA.

ROUND 5:

NBA, NCAA, AND THE NHL: THE BIDDING WAR HAS BEGUN

So now that baseball and football have been divvied up, what's next? Reportedly, Take-Two is already talking with the NBA, NHL, and NCAA about potential licensing deals. You can bet EA won't be sitting there twiddling their thumbs, however.

Rumors persist from insider sources that the NBA is willing to go exclusive, but with parameters—it'll dole out exclusivity for different types of games, meaning EA could sign on for the arcade piece of the NBA's licensing puzzle (for its *NBA Street* series), while Take-Two could ink a deal to control NBA's simulation game (with its *NBA 2K* series).

Both EA and Take-Two are relatively mum on the topic, only saying that they are in discussions with the NBA and NHL.

Let the fisticuffs resume. « *Todd Zuniga*

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30X
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RIVALS
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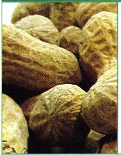
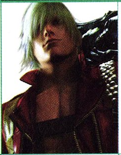
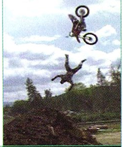
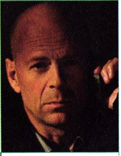
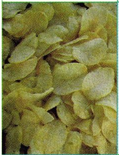
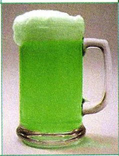
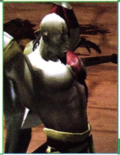
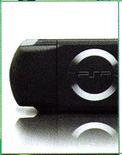
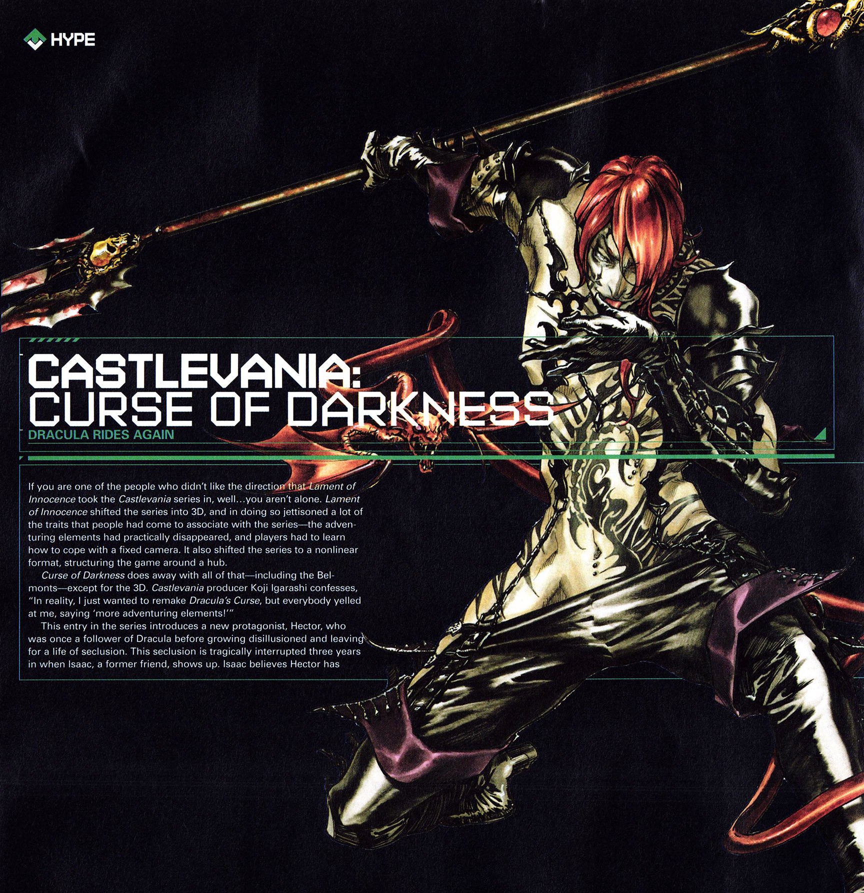
MARCH 2K5

THE MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	You know what month this is? National Peanut Month! Try a peanut butter and bacon sandwich! And if you're allergic to Mr. Peanut, you can, er, mash some peas together instead.	01 Get ready for spring training. No, not with steroids—***MVP Baseball 2005***, ***MLB 2006***, and ***ESPN MLB 2K5*** are all in stores. [NEW GAMES]	02 For those whose Dante of preference does not have the last name Bichette, ***Devil May Cry 3*** is also available for your gaming pleasure.		04 If you're into motorized groin-smashing accidents, then you can smash away without regard to physical pain or insurance premiums by buying ***MX vs. ATV Unleashed*** today!	
06 Regardless of your opinion on Ronald Reagan, you must applaud his naming of March 6, 1984, as "Frozen Food Day" Go eat that Hungry Man meal that's been in your freezer since '85!	07 Do you think you can do a good job of creating and managing a conference solely dedicated to the development of games? Too late! **GDC** is already up and running from today until the 10th.	08 Have bucketloads of undeserved money burning a hole in your pocket? ***Cold Fear***, ***TimeSplitters: Future Perfect***, and ***EA Sports Rugby 2005*** are ready and waiting! [NEW GAMES]		10	11 ***Hostage***—Bruce Willis is another coplike dude who befriends a boy! This adaptation of Robert Crais' solid crime novel was done by the guy who directed ***Splinter Cell's*** cut-scenes. Yay?	
	14 Giancarlo loooooves to scatter Baked Lays potato chips inside his sandwiches. Join him in some official potato chip fun on Potato Chip Day!	15 ***Fear Factor***, ***Musashi Samurai Legend***, and ***Rainbow Six: Lockdown*** are all yearning for your legal tender. Don't let them down! [NEW GAMES]		17 Drink your green-colored beverages and annoy the living crap out of people who forgot to put on green apparel! We prefer getting a pint with our mates.		19
20 It's the spring equinox! So not only is Easter Sunday nearby, but it's time to either plant, or harvest your precious seeds! Er, don't read too much into that last phrase.		22 While waiting for the PSP to launch, sate your gaming needs with some delicious ***God of War***, ***Dragon Ball Z: Sagas***, ***Shining Tears***, and ***World Tour Soccer***, all out today. [NEW GAMES]		24 Pick up your PSP! Watch Tobey Maguire beat up Alfred "Throw me the idol and I'll throw you the whip" Molina on the bus! Give life to ***Lumines***! Love your PSP! It is your new leader!	25 Pay homage to Mister RCA for taking a chance on manufacturing a "color picture tube" for the "television" back in 1954. Without his forward thinking, imagine what games would look like!	
27 Apparently, in Ye Olden Days, the Easter Bunny was a bird that got transformed into an egg-laying rabbit. There is no empirical evidence of whether it laid chocolate eggs, though.	28 It's time to celebrate Something on a Stick Day! Our favorite stick items include: balls, meats, cheeses, severed heads of enemies (and friends), and other sticks.	29 Did you know that Australians have plastic money? Alas, we have to use paltry paper money to buy games like ***Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*** and ***Lego Star Wars*** today. [NEW GAMES]		31 Today is a reminder of something that is very important for you to understand: Nothing lasts forever.		



CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

DRACULA RIDES AGAIN

If you are one of the people who didn't like the direction that *Lament of Innocence* took the *Castlevania* series in, well…you aren't alone. *Lament of Innocence* shifted the series into 3D, and in doing so jettisoned a lot of the traits that people had come to associate with the series—the adventuring elements had practically disappeared, and players had to learn how to cope with a fixed camera. It also shifted the series to a nonlinear format, structuring the game around a hub.

Curse of Darkness does away with all of that—including the Belmonts—except for the 3D. *Castlevania* producer Koji Igarashi confesses, "In reality, I just wanted to remake *Dracula's Curse*, but everybody yelled at me, saying 'more adventuring elements!'"

This entry in the series introduces a new protagonist, Hector, who was once a follower of Dracula before growing disillusioned and leaving for a life of seclusion. This seclusion is tragically interrupted three years in when Isaac, a former friend, shows up. Isaac believes Hector has

CASTLEVANIA: THE SERIES

The *Castlevania* franchise has been around a long time. In fact, if it were a person, it would be legally old enough to vote this year. Allow us to present the timeline of *Castlevania* games, American style.

1987
CASTLEVANIA
NES, Commodore 64, Amiga, arcade

1988
CASTLEVANIA II: SIMON'S QUEST
NES

1988
HAUNTED CASTLE
Arcade

1989
CASTLEVANIA: THE ADVENTURE
Game Boy

1990
CASTLEVANIA III: DRACULA'S CURSE
NES

1991
CASTLEVANIA II: BELMONT'S REVENGE
Game Boy

1991
SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV
SNES

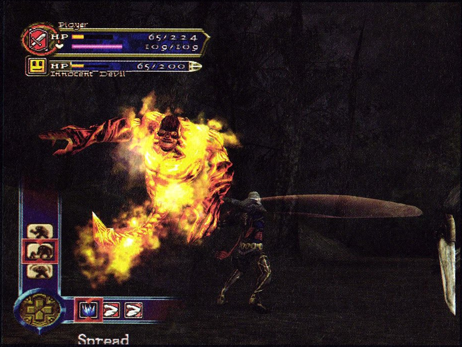
1994
CASTLEVANIA: BLOODLINES
Genesis

1995
CASTLEVANIA: DRACULA X
SNES

1997
CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT
PlayStation

1998
CASTLEVANIA LEGENDS
Game Boy

1999
CASTLEVANIA
Nintendo 64



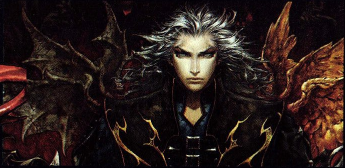
somehow caused Dracula's death, and he implicates Hector's girlfriend in a crime, which ultimately results in her death. All of this is simply a very convoluted way of getting Hector to follow Isaac back to Dracula's castle, where the game commences. Why no Belmonts? Igarashi feels that introducing a new hero will strengthen the adventuring elements.

So, what can you expect once you get to Dracula's castle? For one thing, you'll be able to see the ceiling. Igarashi has done away with *Lament of Innocence*'s fixed camera. "Now we have to make ceilings for all these places we never had to think about before," he jokes. The game is also a lot bigger—though the number of stages has yet to be announced, the size of each stage equals the entire Forgotten Gardens section from *Lament of Innocence*.

Combat seems to be one of the few things that is relatively unchanged from the last game, still being set up as a branching system. Igarashi promises a number of new weapons and items, but one of the key additions is a skill called devil forging, which will allow Hector to summon what Igarashi calls "innocent devils" to assist him in his progress through the castle. These devils will be available to aid Hector in combat or to get him past certain obstacles; the type of task you need assistance with will determine the sort of devil that is summoned. While we only saw a crow and a soldier-type devil, there are more than 30 devils in the game, though you won't be able to have any more than one devil assisting you at a time. While Igarashi has a favorite devil, he refuses to identify it, saying only, "Sorry, can't say, but he's the bad one!"

Will *Curse of Darkness* assuage the disappointment that many *Castlevania* fans felt after *Lament of Innocence*? It's still too early for us to tell, but we'll keep you updated as the game gets closer to release. «

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** Fall



PRETTY AS A PICTURE

Ayami Kojima, who designed characters for *Lament of Innocence*, *Aria of Sorrow*, *Harmony of Dissonance*, and *Symphony of the Night*, is back. She designed all the main characters for the new game, plus three innocent devils. Her first character design was for Koei's *Soldnerschild*.

1999
CASTLEVANIA: LEGACY OF DARKNESS
Nintendo 64

2001
CASTLEVANIA CHRONICLES
PlayStation

2001
CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON
Game Boy Advance

2002
CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE
Game Boy Advance

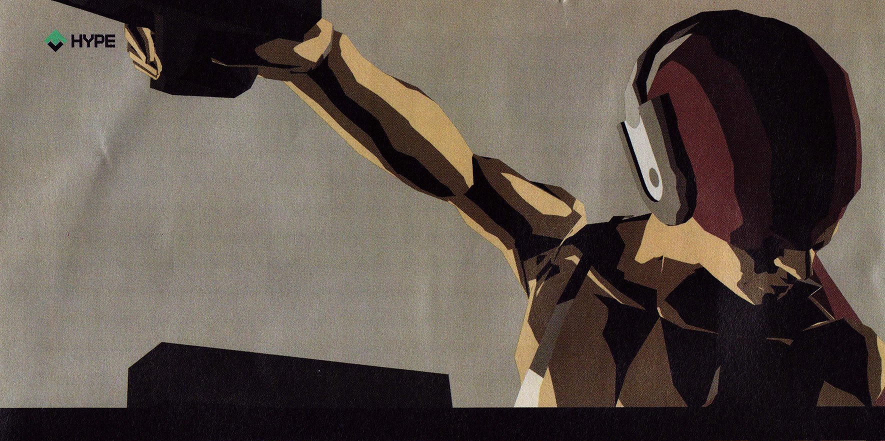
2002
KONAMI COLLECTOR'S SERIES: CASTLEVANIA & CONTRA
PC

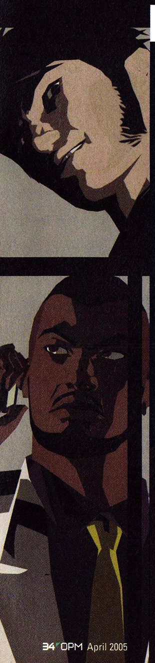
2003
CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW
Game Boy Advance

2003
CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE
PlayStation 2

2004
CASTLEVANIA
Mobile phone

2004
CLASSIC NES SERIES: CASTLEVANIA
Game Boy Advance





KILLER 7

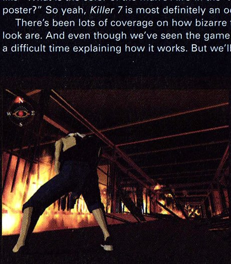
DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITIES, WRESTLERS, AFROS...JUST ANOTHER TYPICAL DAY

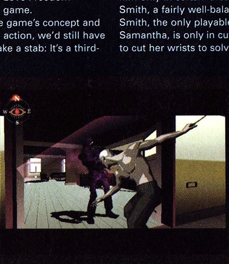
***"Killer 7* is a postmodern action-adventure,"** says producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi. It's evocative of David Lynch, and Kobayashi counts hard-boiled crime fiction, Mexican wrestlers, and numerous manga as its inspiration.

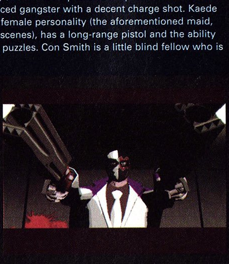
How do we begin? "Killer 7" refers to the seven additional personalities of legendary assassin Harman Smith. As far as we know, these aren't mere personalities, but actual people you can switch between on the fly. The plot involves a man who can turn people into "Heaven Smiles," which are living biological bombs. There's a mission to eliminate the leader of "The Afros," who happens to be a jive-talking African-American with, well, a huge Afro and a propensity for bombing things. There's a woman who will let you save the game only if she's dressed as a maid—sometimes she's dressed in street clothing and will act out her amorous desires upon comatose men instead of letting you save. To pass the "Presidential Psychological Loyalty Test," you need to answer questions like "What is the color of the man's Afro in the 'We Love Freedom' poster?" So yeah, *Killer 7* is most definitely an odd game.

There's been lots of coverage on how bizarre the game's concept and look are. And even though we've seen the game in action, we'd still have a difficult time explaining how it works. But we'll take a stab: It's a third-person action-adventure—à la *Resident Evil* games before *RE4*—that has first-person shooting segments interspersed throughout. Typically, you have one of the Killer 7 walking around (which you accomplish by holding down a button to move forward and using the analog stick to select different pathways as choices come up). Whenever you hear a laugh, you switch to first-person view to see the Heaven Smile(s), and then shoot it (be sure to aim at the glowing weak spots—reminiscent of those on an enemy from *RE4*, which Kobayashi also produced). After killing it, you gain blood, which you can use to heal yourself, perform special attacks, upgrade your stats, or add abilities. When you're not shooting, you're completing such tasks as taking tests, fixing backed-up toilets, or finding soul bullets.

Throughout all of this, you can switch personalities on the fly, which you need to do because each one has distinct advantages and skill sets. The "main" character is wheelchair-bound Harman Smith; you play as him only in certain areas, and he has a powerful sniper rifle. There's Dan Smith, a fairly well-balanced gangster with a decent charge shot. Kaede Smith, the only playable female personality (the aforementioned maid, Samantha, is only in cut-scenes), has a long-range pistol and the ability to cut her wrists to solve puzzles. Con Smith is a little blind fellow who is



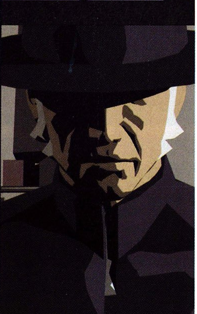


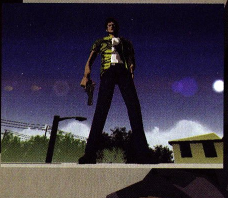


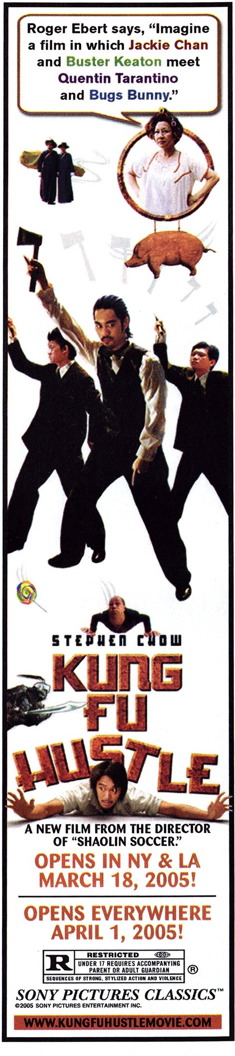
weak but shoots and reloads the fastest; despite his blindness he can sense secrets that everyone else will completely miss. The laid-back Coyote Smith is a former thief, so he can pick locks, and he's the only personality that can jump. The brooding Kevin Smith is a knife-wielding maniac who can turn invisible if you're feeling stealthy, and the even more psychotic Mask De Smith is a Mexican wrestler who uses his strength and dual grenade-launchers to get through puzzles. Finally, Garcian Smith is "the clean-up man," and is the only Smith that can resurrect other Smiths; if you die as any other character, Garcian can retrieve the corpse (represented as a bag of meat) and revive it there. If he dies, you might want to reload your save.

Even after all this, the game's surface has barely been scratched. Gameplay aspects might seem elementary at first, but it's the content that makes *Killer 7* so distinctive. Kobayashi jokes, "Director Goichi Suda is definitely crazy, but I wouldn't say he's mentally disturbed." We have absolutely no idea how John Q. Gamer will react to this, or whether Suda is certifiably crazy or not; we know for sure that *Killer 7* is a game to watch out for. «

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Grasshopper **Release** Q2 2005






Roger Ebert says, "Imagine a film in which Jackie Chan and Buster Keaton meet Quentin Tarantino and Bugs Bunny."
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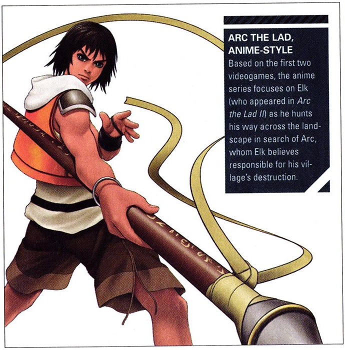
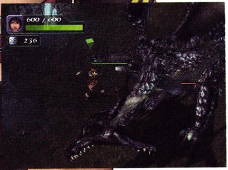


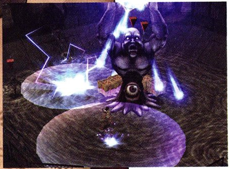
ARC THE LAD, ANIME-STYLE

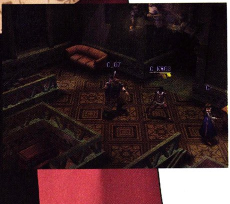
Based on the first two videogames, the anime series focuses on Elk (who appeared in *Arc the Lad II*) as he hunts his way across the landscape in search of Arc, whom Elk believes responsible for his village's destruction.

ARC THE LAD: END OF DARKNESS

THE END OF THE TURN-BASED ARC







Remember *Beyond the Beyond*? Be glad you don't. The months between the PlayStation's U.S. debut and the release of *Final Fantasy VII* were filled with a series of mediocre RPGs punctuated by some games that were, at best, "solid." Although the original *Arc the Lad* hit Japan in 1995 along with the PS1, it took its sweet time getting to the States, arriving a whopping six years later as part of 2001's *Arc the Lad Collection*. The series has never been a *Final Fantasy*, but historically, it's been just good enough to sate RPGers looking for some nourishment.

Arc the Lad's roots are in solid turn-based RPG action, so it's a bit of a surprise to see this new installment play as a real-time action-RPG. Rather than putting you in a straightforward linear quest, *End of Darkness* has you, as Edda, accepting missions from a central hub. Some are as elementary as "get rid of the hay," others involve finding beasts or items, and still others have you performing the occasional escort mission or two. These, in turn, end up advancing the story line, as opposed to games in which you just run around from point A to B and hit things.

As Edda cavorts around the world and does the normal RPG thing of righting wrongs and forging everlasting friendships, he adds party members who help him out during his questing. Due to the real-time, actiony combat system, the AI ends up taking control of your extra party members. But if you're feeling sociable and have friends on the Interweb, you can hook up online and do either 4-on-4 team sorties or cooperative questing together.

Whether you play with friends or use AI characters, you'll be able to choose your squad from among tons of characters. *End of Darkness* is akin to a reunion episode; 24 characters culled from previous games become playable, from Kharg (hero of *Twilight of the Spirits*) to the original Arc himself.

Finally, if these changes and additions aren't intriguing enough, the bizarre denizens of *End of Darkness*' universe—which include hat-wearing alligators, armadillos with clawed gloves, and tiny folk who look like Easter eggs with arms and faces—make this installment worth watching. «

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Cattle Call **Release** May

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RAINBOW SIX: LOCKDOWN

REMINDING YOU THAT HELL IS OTHER PEOPLE

While you can always depend on Team Rainbow to travel the world fighting terror and injustice, you can now add "they also shoot people on the Interweb" to the list of Rainbow's great deeds.

Yes, you might scoff at *Rainbow Six: Lockdown* for featuring standard multiplayer deathmatch modes, in which Team Rainbow and nefarious mercenaries shoot at each other, but the game also introduces a new "rivalry" mode. Think of rivalry as an objective-based variant on domination: Each map has a few distinct objectives, and Rainbow and the mercenaries compete to complete those objectives. Each one usually requires a team to capture and then secure some object. So, when the mercenaries are trying to set off a bomb, Rainbow would be trying to defuse it.

Gadgetwise, each team has unique tools that complement the equipment carried by the opposition. For example, Team Rainbow can use a motion tracker to look inside a room and see if anyone's moving in it before opening the door. Meanwhile, the mercenary team members can hook up their PDAs to security cameras wired throughout a given level and scope out what Rainbow is up to. If the mercenaries want to give themselves more time to prepare traps (using lethal claymores, as opposed to Rainbow's nonlethal flash mines), they can use the L&H Door Fuser to fuse the hinges together and force Rainbow to use their precious little flashbangs or door hammers. These varying gadgets help make the rivalry mode a little more interesting—the mercenaries might try fusing all the doors to their objective closed, while Rainbow could do quick scans of rooms, see which ones hold baddies and which don't, and use their weapons appropriately.

Gunwise, *Rainbow Six* will feature more authentic military hardware, with Team Rainbow using standard counterterrorism firearms (like trusty MP5s) and the mercenaries using more experimental and deadlier guns (like the South African MAG-7, which combines a shotgun's might with a submachine gun's frame). With so many guns and gadgets to play with, *Rainbow Six: Lockdown* is still most likely the closest you're going to get to being a jet-setting counterterrorist operative. «

Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Red Storm **Release** Q1 2005

RAINBOW SIX?

In military jargon, "six" could refer to a group's leader, which is recurring Tom Clancy character John Clark in this case. He's an ex-CIA badass, and has been played by Willem Dafoe in *Clear and Present Danger* and Liev Schreiber in *The Sum of All Fears*.

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30

AND A LONG AND WINDING ROAD IT IS

Just like in the single-player game, *Brothers in Arms*' multiplayer matches put every player in command of four other soldiers. To reemphasize, players don't just play as a single soldier; each person commands four soldiers. This means that while four-player support doesn't sound like much, these matches actually feature 20 soldiers running around, with only four of them being real folks, adding a whole new layer of strategy.

In a typical match, the Axis teams defend two artillery platforms, while the Allies are out to destroy them. Two-on-two matches in other games on such a map are express tickets to snoresville, but now, two-on-two feels like a full-scale battle. Each player can choose between either a fire team (specializing in laying down covering fire) or an assault team (specializing in direct attacks). With the help of voice chat, you and your buddy can actually pull off coordinated attacks. A standard tactic would be for the fire team to sit behind cover and hit the enemy with suppressive fire while the assault team goes for a vulnerable flank.

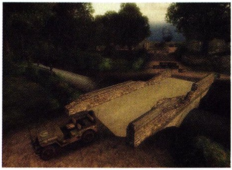
Now, say the Allies botch this attack, get eliminated in one round, and make the Axis players more confident. The next round, one Allied player has his team try the same tactic, but while both Axis teams foolishly go after the first Allied player, the second player can take a completely different path to the objective and destroy it while the Axis teams are distracted. Then while the Axis teams attempt to deal with the second Allied player, the first one swoops in for the second artillery gun. In the final round, the Axis players might watch the two side routes the Allies used in the previous rounds. Only they are surprised when both Allied teams do an aggressive and combined straight run through the center of the map and hit both guns hard from the middle while the Axis teams scramble to meet the sudden attack.

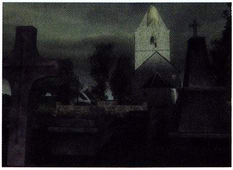
This is just a basic play-by-play of a three-round match, but the voice chat and decent AI teammates create a slick fusion of tactics and action that makes *BIA* more interesting than yet another random Nazi shooter. «

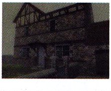
Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Gearbox/Ubisoft Shanghai **Release** Q1 2005

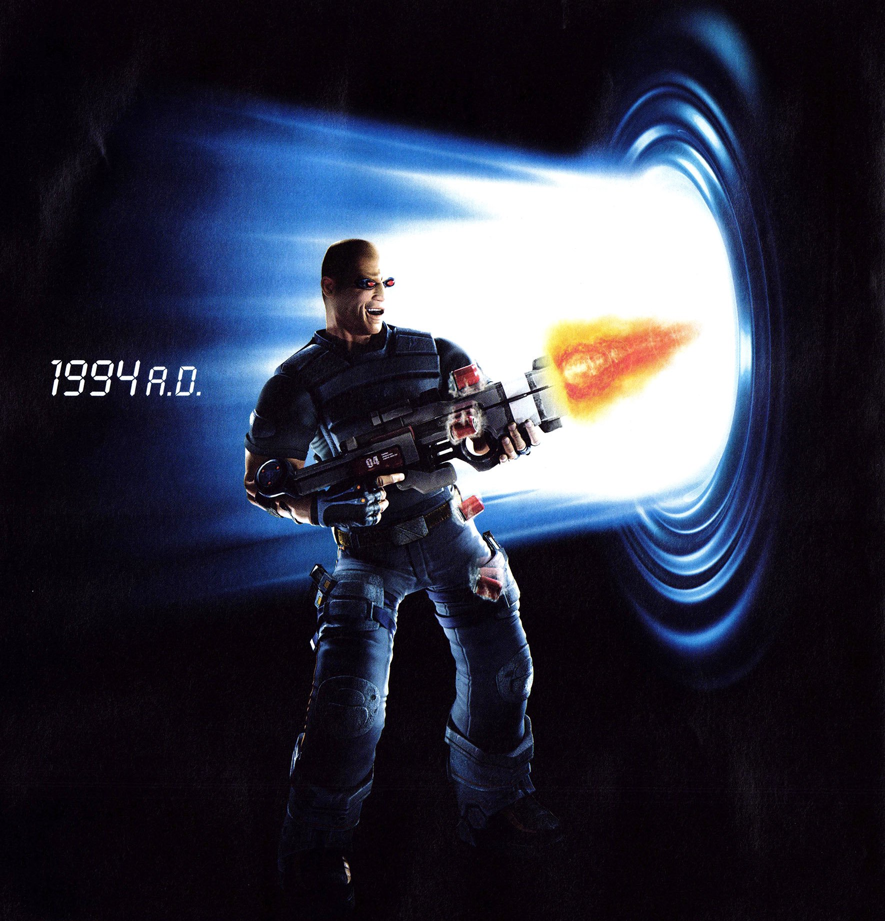
YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME!

Here's some behind-the-scenes intrigue: Randy Pitchford, head of Gearbox, was on the Allied team the first time they lost. He then switched over to the Axis team, and lost again, twice. It looks like the "let the boss win" memo didn't make its way around Gearbox's inboxes.









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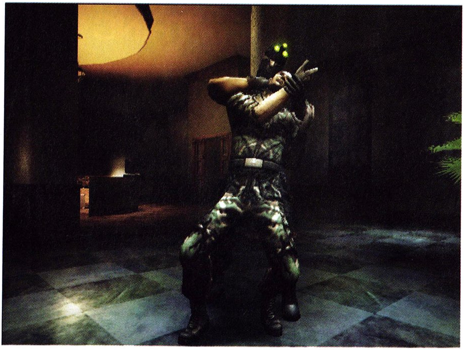

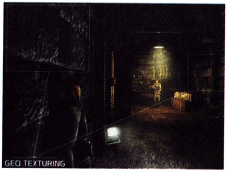

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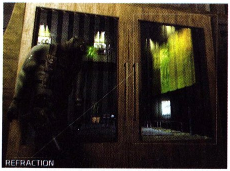
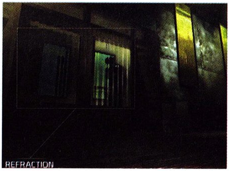


REFRACTION



REFRACTION

MANY COOKS IN CLANCY'S KITCHEN

Pandora Tomorrow's versus mode came from Ubisoft Annecy (near the French Alps), and it's also doing *Chaos Theory's* versus mode. Ubisoft Montreal is focused on the single-player and cooperative modes. Ubisoft Shanghai isn't porting the PS2 version, unlike other *SC* titles.

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

GEOTEXTURED FOR YOUR PLEASURE

While ***Splinter Cell Chaos Theory*** offers another host of neat tweaks and additions to the series' stealth gameplay, what might turn out to be the most interesting aspect of the game is the new technology it's bringing to the PS2. Somehow, those Canadian developers up in Montreal have managed to overcome technical hurdles and make the PS2 version nigh indistinguishable from the Xbox and PC versions.

At the moment, the hot tech is normal mapping, which is a super-advanced technique of putting high-resolution textures onto fewer polygons. Developers love to normal map the heck out of everything nowadays...except the PS2 hardware isn't quite capable of normal mapping, which is why you don't see games such as *Doom 3* and *The Chronicles of Riddick* on the system at the moment.

Yet Ubisoft Montreal has managed to produce a similar type of technology called "geotexturing." In our extremely layman minds, we understand that geotexturing entails sending geometry data through the texture pipeline. So on top of the normal geometry data (the actual layout of any given level), the textures themselves can feature geometry using this technique, meaning that walls can have protruding stones, wooden beams can break up a smooth wall, and when you see a pipe running along the ceiling, that pipe might technically be a texture. It's really too quirky to explain adequately, but just look at the end result to see it in action.

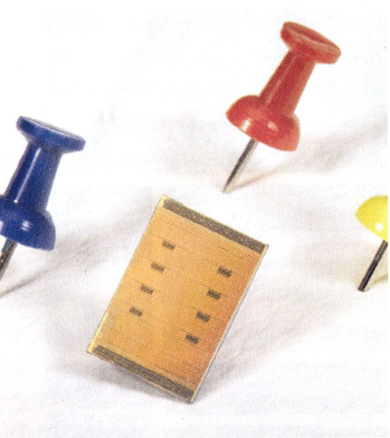
Additionally, the development team has somehow managed to create refraction technology that is actually better on the PS2 than on the other systems. So much so that on the PS2, there is an exclusive water stealth kill (in which Sam snatches someone and suffocates him underwater), which was created just so the player has something cool to do with the nice-looking water.

The rest of the game feels pretty good, with the goofily named closer-than-ever system (a new method of pulling off lethal stealth moves) and the dual multiplayer shot of versus mode (from *Pandora Tomorrow*) and the new cooperative mode. But you can thank those Canadians and their fancy geotexturing for making the whole package look as nice as it does here. «

Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Ubisoft Montreal/Ubisoft Annecy **Release** March

DID YOU KNOW?

Tom Clancy, the author of the books that both the *Splinter Cell* and *Rainbow Six* franchises are based on, was actually deemed ineligible for military service because of his poor eyesight. Before he became a writer, he was an insurance salesman.



CELL ME EVERYTHING

TOP BRAINIACS TALK PS3 BEYOND

The key to creating the PS3 is no bigger than a thumbtack. We're talking about its heart and soul, the Cell processor. Sony, Toshiba, and IBM have been working together to create this CPU since 2000. The goal is to "create a multimedia-friendly CPU ready for broadband-rich media applications." Translation: They want the foundation for the ultimate gaming machine.

Sony's next-gen console will be unveiled in Japan at the end of March, but Stateside, our heads are spinning after a recent technology briefing where we got numbers—lots and lots of numbers. In fact, when IBM's Dr. Jim Kahle started talking about what makes this new processor so great, all we heard were ones and zeroes.

The whole framework behind Cell is shared computing between multiple CPUs. Eight synergistic processing units with a Power-based core can exceed 4GHz clock speeds. What does that all mean? Theoretically, this tiny solution could be 10 times more powerful than current top-of-the-line processors. However, Masakazu Suzuoki of Sony CEI warns, "It is not fair to compare [the current processors] with the Cell. What we can say is that in some applications, namely digital media and entertainment, [the Cell] works much better." All Kahle could add was, "Stay tuned."

A big concern for the PS3 could be heat and power. While Cell is capable of well over 4GHz clock speeds, the amount of heat that power would generate (not taking into account the heat produced by any other components) will require a lot to keep it cool. Although Cell has advanced, built-in thermal sensors, this bad boy still needs breathing room. What does this mean for you? Your PS3 could be could be slightly bigger and bulkier than your PS2. Spokespeople on hand couldn't actually confirm what the clock speed of the chip inside the PS3 will be, but the potential is astronomical compared to what you're seeing today. « *Darren Gladstone*

CELL ARCHITECTURE BY THE NUMBERS

- 8 synergistic processing units (SPU) working together
- 64-bit Power architecture with VMX
- 2.5MB of on-chip memory (512KB L2 cache and 8 x 256KB)
- 234 million transistors
- 256 Gflops
- 128+ concurrent transactions to memory per processor

ZOE FLOWER

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ZOE FLOWER, aka "Gamer Girl," creates TV programs and music videos and looks good doing it. See the details at zoeflower.1UP.com.

WHY CAN'T WE EMBRACE OUR CULTURE AS ART?

For most of us, the thought of February conjures images of Cupid and valentines and flowers. But for a lucky few, the annual DICE Summit in Las Vegas is a highlight of the month. (Sponsored by the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences, DICE is where industry luminaries meet to discuss new ways to "design, innovate, communicate, and entertain.") I admit that in the past I haven't paid much attention; the gathering often only makes the press because of some journalist's drunken indiscretion. (No, this is not a witty self-reference! My halo remains intact, even if it's a little crooked.) So it was with trepidation, and the lure of the token goody bag, that I made my pilgrimage this year—despite the list of speakers that included such non–game-related people as fashion designer Mark Ecko. What could he possibly say to a bunch of nerds? (Besides talk about his new graffiti epic for PS2 coming this year.)

Well, what a wake-up call I had—along with the rest of the videogame industry, staring with jaws agape at the passionate, eloquent, back-handedly complimentary call to arms that Mr. Fashion himself floored us with. I felt the room tense at such brazen statements as "Your technology means f*** all. Consumers don't give a s*** about you. They just care about the end product." It was a slap in the face for me; it got me riled, but also got me thinking about the truth to that bold quote. After all, how many of us would change our purchase decisions if we knew a game developer had suffered a stroke during the final stages of creative genius? Is there such a thing as a sympathy buy? Even if I do want to buy 10 copies of *God of War* after reading the tribulations that David Jaffe details regularly in his blog, I can't imagine that this is the norm. Most of us are lost in a sea of boxes that scream out to us like puppies without homes. And we just want to pick the one that's going to show us the most love and give us the most entertainment when we get home.

But despite Ecko's tell-it-how-it-is rant and my own experience as the end consumer, I still can't help but feel there has to be a way to celebrate the creative minds that drive the content we crave. And maybe the average person doesn't get chills over a normal-mapping demo or line up for Kojima's autograph—but that has to count for something! Why can't we embrace our culture as art? Why are we seeking validation with constant comparisons to the film industry? Why are we struggling with an identity crisis when even a rich fashion designer wants to make games?!

Apparently I should go ahead and sign myself up for my very own rant at next year's DICE summit. But until then I'll be considering what it means to be a consumer of games versus someone who is simply passionate about them. And so should you. «

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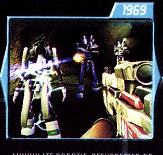
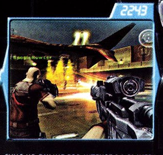


ANNIHILATE ROBOTIC, RESURRECTED OR LIVING ENEMIES WITH A WICKED ARSENAL.



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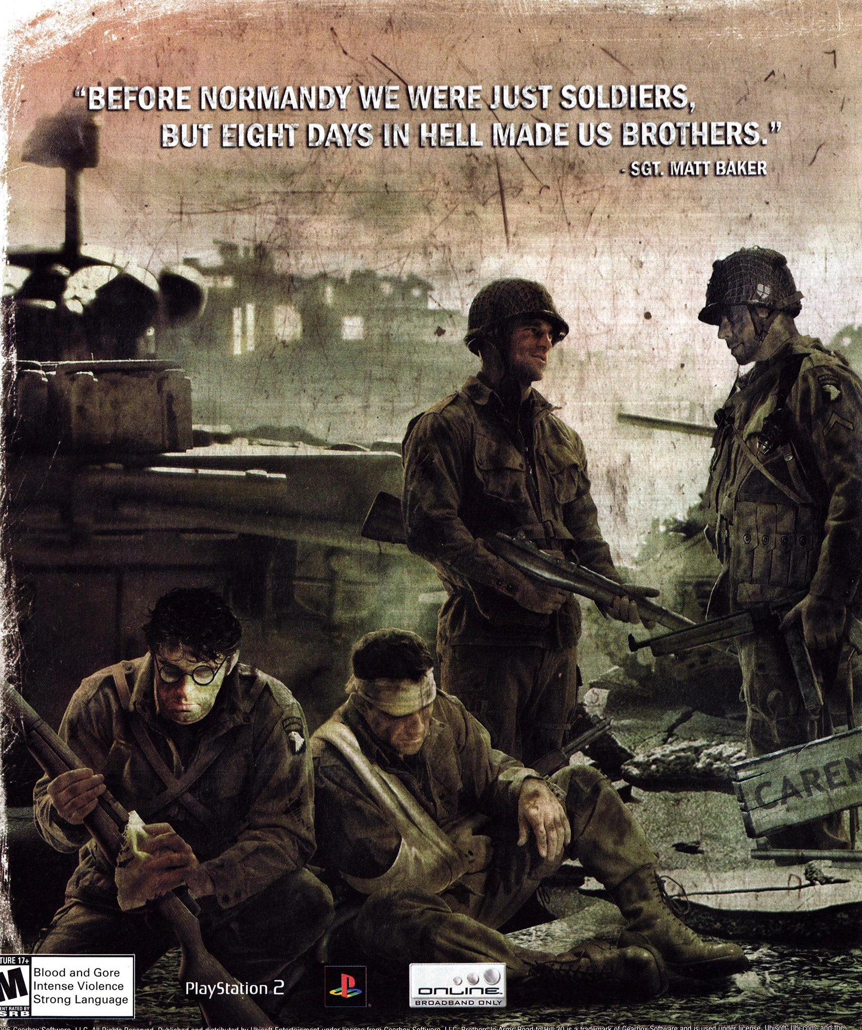
"BEFORE NORMANDY WE WERE JUST SOLDIERS,
BUT EIGHT DAYS IN HELL MADE US BROTHERS."
- SGT. MATT BAKER
CAREN
MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Strong Language
PlayStation 2
ONLINE
BROADBAND ONLY

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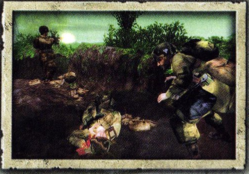

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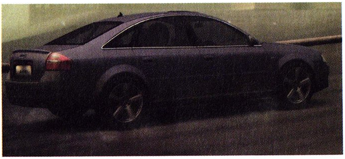


ENTHUSIA

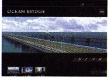
AT LAST! A RACING GAME FOR STATISTICIANS!

In *Enthusia*, it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you drive your car. This may not sound like such a departure from the racing-sim formula, but believe us, it is. Just about every move is analyzed, rated, and rewarded. You may think you're used to this sort of thing from playing various *Gran Turismos*; if so, you're in for a rude awakening.

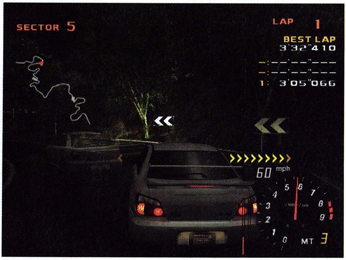
The Enthusia life (read: career) mode centers around Enthu points (we wish we were making that up) that can be considered roughly analogous to hit points in an RPG. As you race, points are deducted for going off course, hitting walls, or crashing into opponents. Finish a race with some Enthu points left and you'll recover a small portion of your total; lose all your points and you'll have to sit out the next race. You can recover larger chunks by resting or switching cars, but either choice takes you out of the race pool for an in-game week and can allow your overall Enthusia life ranking to drop.

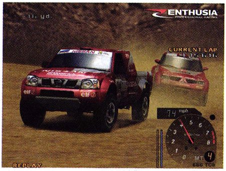
Sound complex? We're just getting started; *Enthusia* loves numbers with an almost obsessive-compulsive fervor. Consider: After each race, skill points are doled out. You start with a certain number of base points, which are dictated by your car choice: Traction control, for example, will lower your base points, as will using an automatic transmission instead of a manual one. Added to your base points are points awarded for distance driven, your finishing position, and the time of your fastest lap. Subtract any Enthu points you've lost by driving recklessly, and you'll end up with a skill point total, which is then added to both your car level and your driver level.

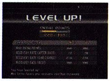
As you build up points in your driver level, you'll find yourself leveling up. Higher levels increase your total Enthu points and the rate at which you recover them. As you add points to your car level, you will similarly level up periodically. This is the only way to improve your car. As you step up toward level 10, your car's weight, tires, and power will improve in predetermined increments. When your car hits level 10, each category will be maxed out at level 3; from this point on, you'll no longer earn car level points, but you'll get a 25-point bonus on your driver level.

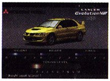

OCEAN BRIDGE

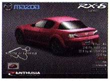
DRAGON RANGE

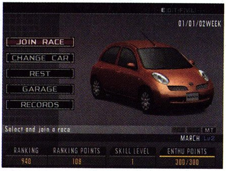

SECTOR 5
LAP 1
BEST LAP
3'32"410
1: 3'05"066
60 mph
MT 3

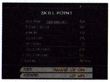

ENTHUSIA
PROFESSIONAL RACING
CURRENT LAP
74 mph
MT 4
REPLAY

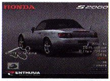


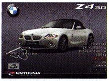

LANCER Evolution VIII

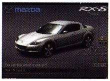

mazda
RX-8
ENTHUSIA


01/01/02WEEK
JOIN RACE
CHANGE CAR
REST
GARAGE
RECORDS
Select and join a race
MT
MARCH
RANKING
948
RANKING POINTS
108
SKILL LEVEL
1
ENTHU POINTS
300/300

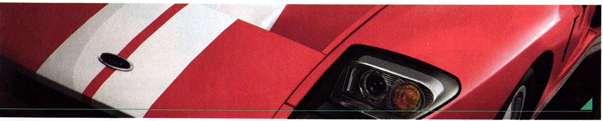

SKILL POINT


HONDA
S2000
ENTHUSIA


Z4
ENTHUSIA



Ford
focus
ENTHUSIA



GARAGE DAYS

Here's a partial list of the cars slated to appear in *Enthusia*. Keep in mind that most of these are Japanese models; the specific model names or designations may change before the U.S. release.

Alfa Romeo	147 GTA
ASL	Garaiya
Aston Martin	DB5 Vantage
Aston Martin	V12 Vanquish
Audi	R8 Team Goh 2003
Audi	R8 Team Goh 2004
Audi	TT Coupe 2.3 Quattro S-Line
BMW	Z4 3.0i
Caterham	Super 7 Superlight R500
Chevrolet	1971 Corvette Stingray Coupe
Chevrolet	2002 Corvette Z51
Citroën	Xsara
Ford	1966 Mustang GT
Ford	2005 GT
Ford	Focus Rally Car
Honda	NSX Type R
Lancia	Stratos
Land Rover	Range Rover
Lotus	Europe Special
Lotus	Elise 111S
Mazda	787B
Mazda	Roadster RS-II
Mazda	RX-7 Spirit R
Mazda	RX-8 Type S
Mazda	Savanna RX-7 Infinity
Mercedes-Benz	CLK-DTM
Mercedes-Benz	G500L
Mercedes-Benz	SLR
Mini	Cooper S
Mitsubishi	Lancer Evolution VIII GSR
Mitsubishi	Pajero Evolution
Mitsubishi	Pajero Short
Nissan	180SX Type X
Nissan	Fairlady Z Version S
Nissan	Pickup Rally
Nissan	R390 GT1
Nissan	Skyline GT-R V-spec II Nur
Nissan	Xanavi Nismo GT-R
Peugeot	206 Rally Car 2000
Renault	Alpine A110 1600SC
Ruf	CTR
Ruf	RGT
Shelby	Cobra 427 S/C
Smart	FourTwo Cabrio
Subaru	Impreza WRX STi
Subaru	Impreza WRX STi Version VI
Suzuki	Cappuccino
Toyota	Celica GT-4 WRC
Toyota	GT-One
Toyota	Land Cruiser 100
Toyota	MR-SV Edition
Toyota	Sprinter Trueno 3-door GT APEX
Volkswagen	Golf R32
Volkswagen	Touareg V8

Next on the postrace debriefing agenda come the ranking points. These start with a base amount that's derived from the class you're competing in. This is multiplied by your car's projected odds of winning the race—calculated before you jump into a race, so you can avoid anything too far out of your league—and then multiplied again by how you placed: 1 for first place, .8 for second place, .6 for third place, and so on. (Interestingly, this means that if you get into a race with odds that are stacked heavily against you, even placing third or fourth can be quite profitable—especially if you're able to do it without losing Enthu points.) The resulting number is then added to your total ranking points, which have an effect on your overall ranking. The higher your ranking, the more races you can compete in and the better the cars you can win in the postrace rival-car raffle.

If all this sounds fairly bizarre and almost indescribably boring, then you're getting the general idea. Remember, though, that all this point-mongering comes after the race—and the racing is pretty darn impressive. Even at the game's incomplete stage of development the cars look and handle very much like the real thing, and the game is—or at least tries to be—as obsessive about physics as it is about statistics. A heads-up display intuitively communicates information about weight transfer, lateral force vectors, and tire traction, for example, while an unusual graphical effect simulates head-bounce and motion blur. There are some oddities in this preview build—drifting through some of the rally courses is all but impossible, for example—but it's all quite innovative.

The question at this point is, Is it innovative enough? Hundreds of licensed cars to collect, dozens of real-world tracks to drive on, no damage modeling or online mode—sound like any racing game you know? *Enthusia* is obviously attempting to distinguish itself from *Gran Turismo* through its ultracomplex numbers game, but it will be interesting to see whether the market can support two painstakingly realistic driving sims. «

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** March

PlayStation

PLAY IT!

Test out *Enthusia* on the disc, though you won't get to try Enthusia life mode. Also, note that the physics diagram has been changed from the demo version's to something more intuitive.

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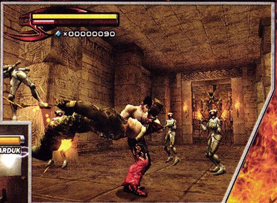
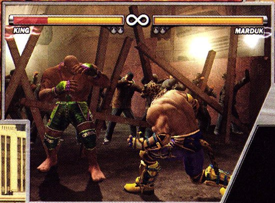
STEP IN. KNUCKLE UP.
BEAT DOWN.



Reveal the unholy origins of the Mishima curse in the bonus action game, *Tekken: Devil Within.*



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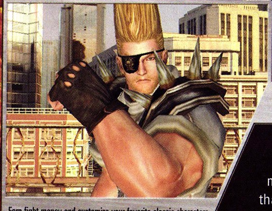

Earn fight money and customize your favorite classic characters with hundreds of caps, shades, costumes and other items.

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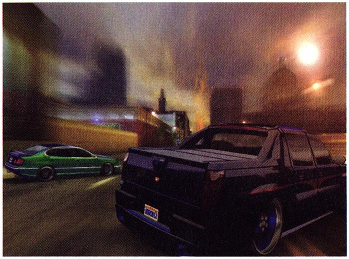
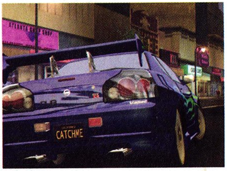
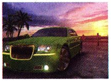
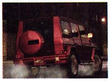
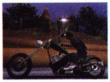










MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

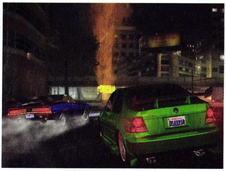
ROAD RAGE PARADISE

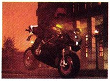
Admit it. Sometimes when you're stuck in heavy traffic on the freeway, you'd like nothing better than to be able to plow through all of the other cars to get to your destination. Of course, you can do that if you want, but then there's that whole thing about laws and murder you'd have to worry about. Fortunately, *Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition* lets you fulfill your road rage fantasies through a series of new gameplay features that give the game a distinctly different feel, depending on the one you're using.

One of these new gameplay mechanics is appropriately called aggro, which you can only use when you're behind the wheel of some of the bigger racing beasts in the game, such as an SUV or a truck. There's a good reason for this—the only way you can charge the aggro meter is by smashing into cars or any of the objects on the side of the road. Once you've collided with enough objects, you can use aggro to plow into even more cars, but this time, the unfortunate fools on the business end of your H2 will go flying through the air. Unfortunately, aggro doesn't last that long, but you'll undoubtedly get a kick out of seeing a car flip through the air when you switch to the reverse-view camera.

The roar mechanic produces a somewhat similar effect in that it obliterates objects in your path. As you might suspect, roar can only be produced by muscle cars and choppers ('cause, you know, their engines roar). You charge roar by drifting in the middle of traffic or around a turn, and when you use it, it produces a massive shock wave that pushes cars out of the way. But you have to be a little bit careful. If you use roar when traffic or your opponents are far away, it won't really be all that effective, but if the vehicles are close to you, it will have a strong impact that will almost completely toss cars to the side.

The last of the three special driving features, zone, is probably the most useful. Much like the turbo meter in the *Burnout* games, the zone meter is filled by passing close to cars or by narrowly avoiding oncoming traffic. Zone is less destructive than the other new gameplay mechanics since it essentially puts you into a bullet-time mode where you can adjust your car's route at normal speed while everything moves





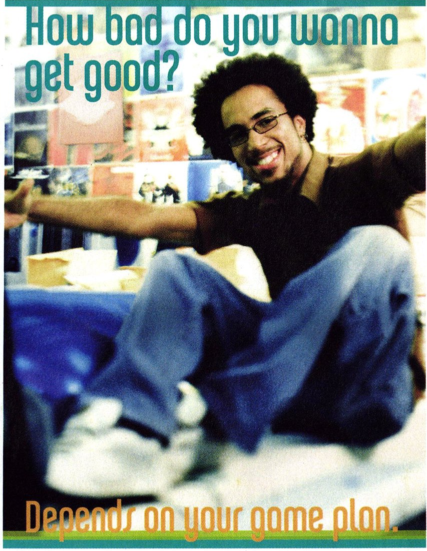
MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

Midnight Club 3's multiplayer mode will feature a number of different race types, including basewars, in which you have to drop off flags at your base before your opponent does. These modes also include various power-ups that can assist you in your quest to be the best driver.

in slow motion. This is really helpful if you've misjudged a turn or you're about to collide with a wall or traffic, which can be a pretty common occurrence if you're zipping around in one of *Midnight Club 3*'s many tuner cars or sport bikes.

Of course, the career mode and races in *Midnight Club 3* are still about skill and learning how to deal with a car's advantages and disadvantages. Sure, a Saleen S7 can beat just about anything off the line in the game, but you really have to be careful with how you manage its speed, because one little slipup can result in your car getting thrown off course. Conversely, an enormous Escalade doesn't have the speed, but it can take a pounding, making it useful for dense traffic situations. Either way, you'll develop a taste for certain cars in *Midnight Club 3*, whether it's because of the way they drive or how good they look when you mod them out in the game's ridiculously deep garage customization mode. «

Pub. Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar San Diego **Release** April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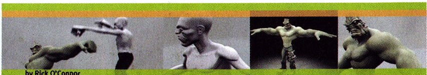
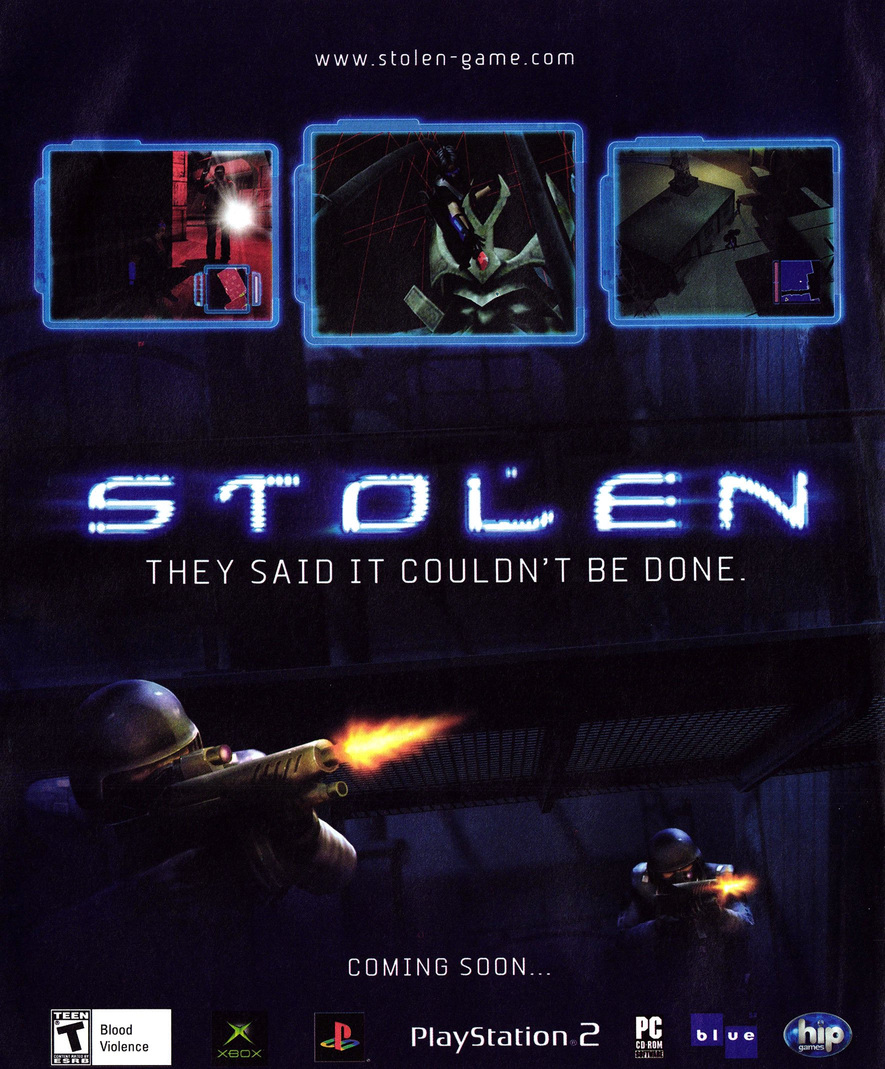


by Rick O'Connor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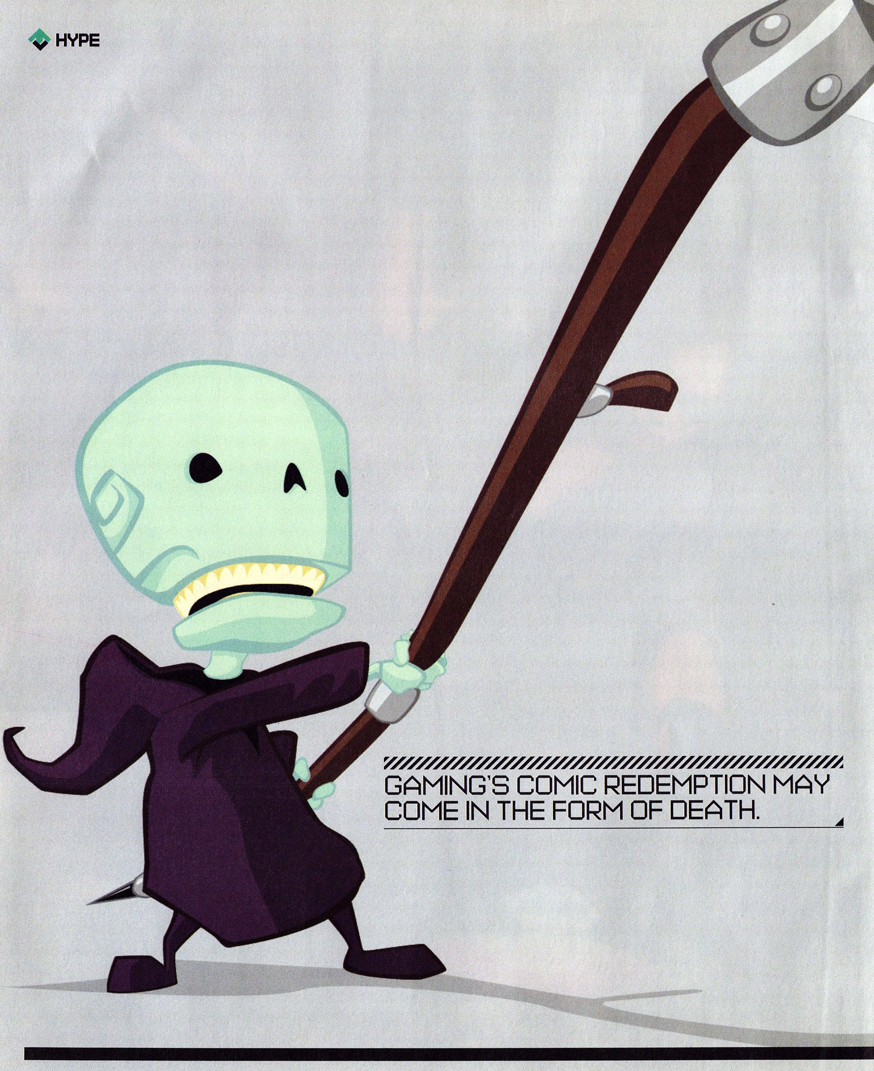
"Stealth with a sexy twist" XBN



GAMING'S COMIC REDEMPTION MAY COME IN THE FORM OF DEATH.

DEATH, JR.

DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY

Genuinely good comedy is tough to come by in games. Oh, there have been many attempts, with decidedly mixed results (the PS2's *The Guy Game*, *Escape from Monkey Island* and *A Bard's Tale* to name a few), but to our knowledge, there's never been a runaway hit in the comedy category. Besides, given the overabundance of shooting, maiming, prostitution, and various dark, edgy, save-the-world plotlines, there's ample evidence to suggest videogaming has no sense of humor at all.

It is then with a bit of irony that gaming's comic redemption comes in the form of death. More specifically, *Death, Jr.*, a third-person action-platformer for the PSP that actually may be funny, and we do mean of the ha-ha sort.

Death, Jr., or DJ to his friends, is the teenage son of the Grim Reaper. Like his dad, DJ carries a scythe wherever he goes, along with an arsenal of guns and explosives. Kids these days!

Predictably, the son of the guy that shows up when you're about to die isn't necessarily the most popular kid in school. DJ's friends include the similarly marginalized: Pandora, who suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder, manifested by a bizarre need to open anything, no matter what's inside; the conjoined-at-the-head twins, Smith and Weston, who are noted for their nerdy smarts; Stigmartha, who bleeds from the hands when she's stressed out; and the armless and legless foreign exchange student, The Seep, who lives in a vat and spews vulgarities. (We've always wanted a friend whose name begins with "The."—*Ed.*)

As the story goes, the kids are on a school field trip to the Museum of Supernatural History, where they come across a box, a box which Pandora is obsessively compelled to open. The opened box unleashes the ancient demon Moloch along with his scourge of evil minions. Now DJ must save his friends, save the world—and all before his dad finds out.

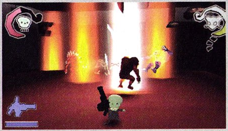
DJ's scythe acts as both a weapon and a puzzle-solving device. All the platformer basics are here—DJ runs, jumps, and attacks enemies directly or with his store of range weapons. The scythe comes in handy to open doors or slide on zip lines or swing on poles. Outside-the-scythe weapons include a lightning gun, dual pistols, a flamethrower, and exploding C4 hamsters. Yes, hamsters.

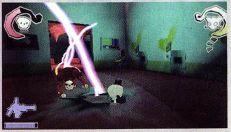
The *Death, Jr.* fun takes place in and around the museum, which is the hub for Moloch and his gang of demons to come and go in this world as they please. The 15 levels are colorful, quirky, and surreal (Meatworld, for instance, is an amusement park that celebrates meat of every kind), and are well populated with a mix of jumping and move-the-box-type puzzles and inventive and—despite the goofy premise—convincing combat.

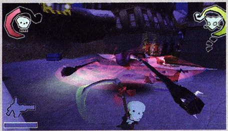
Word is that publisher Konami plans to expand the *Death, Jr.* world to other media. Deals have already been struck with Image Comics and toymaker Gentle Giant Toys, with even a feature film in development.

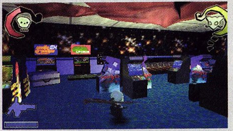
Death, Jr. might be the game that proves humor can be found in the "undiscovered country." We hope so. With the serious state of gaming, we could use a few laughs just about now. «

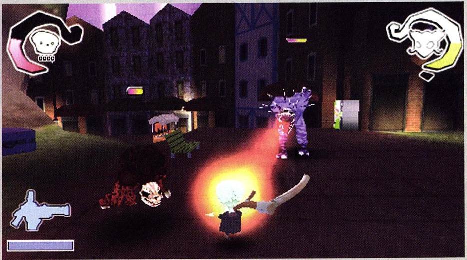
Pub. Konami Digital Entertainment **Dev.** Backbone Entertainment **Release** Spring

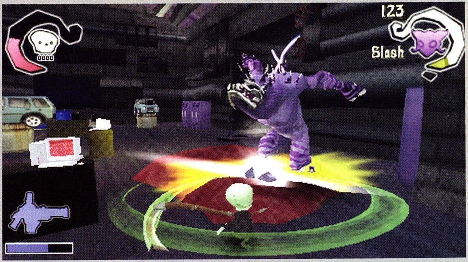


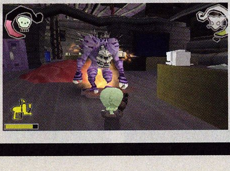


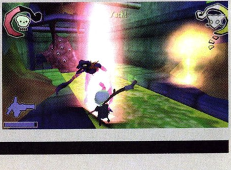












MAJESCO MANIA

A SPIN-OFF AND A VIRAL INFECTION MARK MAJESCO'S PSP SUPPORT

Thanks to the key acquisition of *Psychonauts*, Majesco is quietly becoming a bigger player just by supplying a few unique games. Here's a look at its initial PSP lineup, which is markedly different from other publishers'.

ADVENT SHADOW

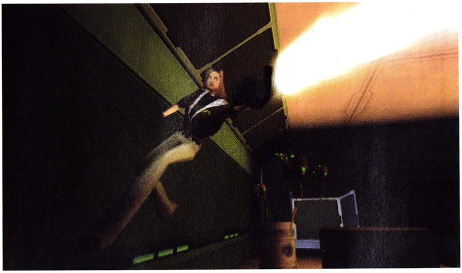
With *Advent Shadow,* the PSP gets the somewhat bizarre opportunity to portray a subplot of an epic game that's not even on the PS2.

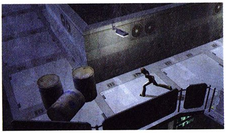
Advent Rising (which will be out this spring on Xbox and PC) is the first part of the proposed Advent Trilogy, a rollicking sci-fi adventure chronicling the messianic journey of Gideon Wyeth. At some point, Gideon crosses paths with Marin Steel, a typical female game character who is nice on the eyes and can do her fair share of shooting and jumping. It's her side of the story that is the focus of *Advent Shadow.*

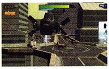
At the moment, Majesco is quite mum about what goes on in *Advent Shadow*. The company will only admit that it's a parallel story to *Advent Rising* and that it's a more focused and portable version of the action-adventure gameplay you'd get in *Advent Rising*. We're not sure if the superhuman powers that make *Advent Rising* so intriguing are retained in *Advent Shadow*, but Majesco promises to fill it with the following slick phrase: "high-speed chases, aerial dogfights, tank battles, melee combat, and acrobatic gameplay set in massive, destructible environments." Sounds good to us.

It sounds like it has a shot at being a good third-person action-adventure, even though it's a companion to a game only on Xbox and PC.

Pub. Majesco **Dev.** Full Fat **Release** Q1 2005





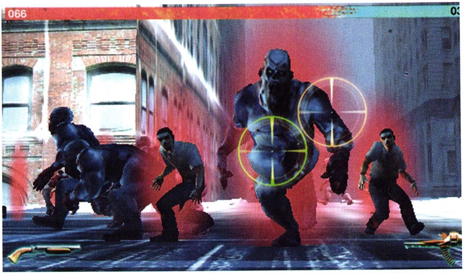


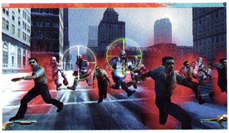
INFECTED

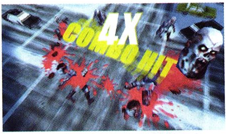
Oh look, zombies. You've got people who, after being infected by some nefariously crafted virus, get all decayed-looking and bloodthirsty. And you have to stop them. Yawn.

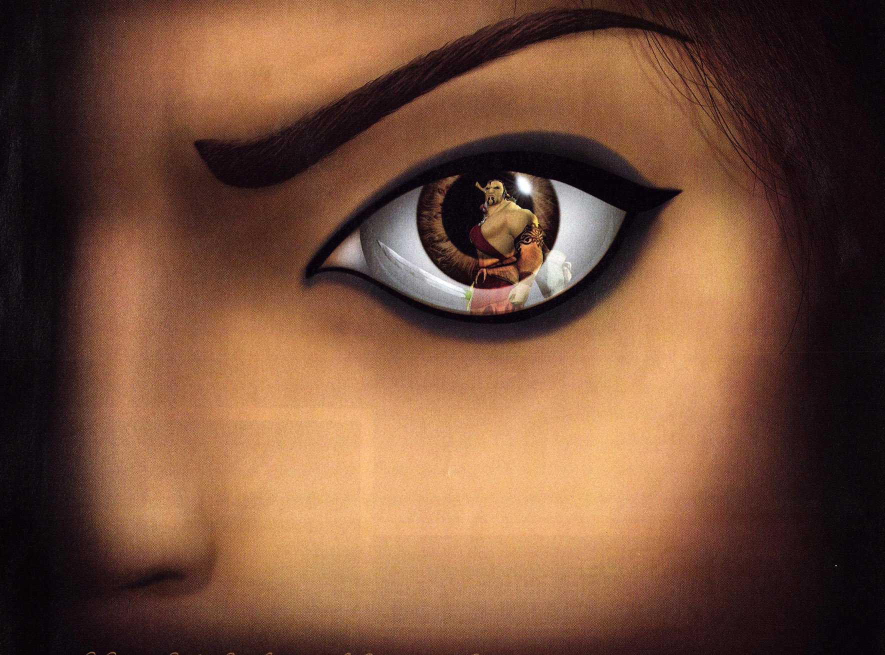
OK, to be fair, the game actually sounds quite solid, thanks to having Planet Moon Studios as its developer. Its work on games like *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* and the original *MDK* proves that it has a good foundation when working on third-person shooters. What makes *Infected* more intriguing is its "virus infection" mechanic. When you're playing Wi-Fi multiplayer, if your opponent manages to "infect" your system, his character will insert himself into your game; next time you boot up a single-player game, you might find your opponent as one of the zombies. So if you absolutely suck at multiplayer and play a bunch of people, all of their characters might be multiplying around in your game—you supposedly get rid of other player infections through special disinfecting missions. It's kind of a unique (if somewhat gross) method of marking your dominance and territory in a multiplayer match.

Pub. Majesco **Dev.** Planet Moon Studios **Release** Q1 2005









She has seen her brother's fate. Her fight is to ensure he never will.

All her life Rau has watched over her. Now Tati is returning the favor. The struggle to prevent the dark magic of Kri from spreading returns, with four playable characters, each with their own menacing weapons and deadly combos. Unique collaborative gameplay pairs you with a fellow warrior, making teamwork essential as you scout, plan and fight your way through breathtaking 3-D environments. This time, the only way to preserve your future is to fight it.

RISE of the KASAI

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Blood and Gore
Violence

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UNTOLD LEGENDS: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE

THE HAPPIEST BLADE OF THEM ALL

While someone playing a PS2 game will often allot gaming time in hours, PSP players are more likely to spend minutes. As a result, we're seeing a lot of differences in how PSP developers are approaching fundamental mechanics, even for games that on the surface look very similar to their PS2 counterparts.

In a PS2 game, it's not unusual to start a side quest and then discover that maybe you need to spend more time leveling up before you go back and give it another go. However, developers are wise to the fact that wasting precious minutes (and battery life) is going to grow old quickly for gamers on the go. *Untold Legends* does have a main campaign that proceeds in a linear fashion, but there are also 20 side quests whose difficulty scales to whatever level your character happens to be. You're also not dependent on portals or gate scrolls to go back and stock up on supplies—just go to the menu and warp back to the market at any point.

Multiplayer is also very adjustable. No distinction is made between single-player games and multiplayer ones; instead, players can join and leave whenever, with up to four players allowed at a time. The difficulty of the game is set according to the host's level, so it's helpful to play with people of similar experience. Though the number of monsters stays the same regardless of how many players are in the game, their difficulty level shifts to provide the appropriate challenge.

A lot of gaming conventions are being tinkered with to save players' time. But who likes to waste time running around, regardless of whether you're working with limited time and battery life or sitting at home on your couch with a few hours to kill? How do backtracking and searching for save points make a game better, no matter the format? It will be interesting to see if the PSP's influence on game structure ends up changing how developers design for its housebound counterparts. «

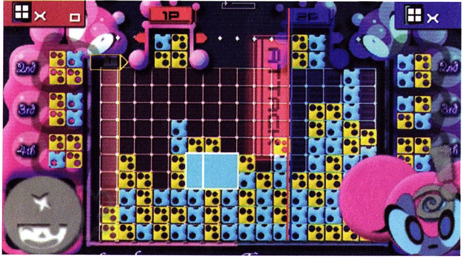
NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH

The gang Brotherhood of the Blade from Disney's *Mighty Ducks* cartoon series. According to IMDb, the premise behind the series was that "a team of humanoid duck ice hockey players/freedom fighters fight evil between games." The Brotherhood's leader, Duke L'Orange, was voiced by Jeff Bennett, who also did voice work in *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II*, *Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams*, and *Samurai Jack*.

Pub. Sony Online Entertainment **Dev.** Sony Online Entertainment **Release** March

PSP: MORE GOOD STUFF

THE GAMES KEEP ON COMING

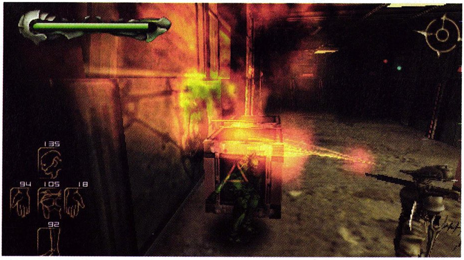


LUMINES

The Japanese launch title *Lumines* (developed by *Rez*'s Tetsuya Mizuguchi) swept through the *OPM* offices as a stealth favorite—the easy-to-learn, difficult-to-master puzzle gameplay combined with a fabulous trance soundtrack proved to be addictive beyond belief. (We have even witnessed certain unnamed editors stealing unmanned PSPs from other editors' offices just to get in a few minutes with the game.) In addition to single-player game that will suck your life away, it's got a great multiplayer mode in which two players face off in an attempt to control the board. Good combos increase your playing area while decreasing your opponent's; a winner is declared once someone is shoved off the board.

For a while, however, it seemed unlikely that the game would make an appearance in the United States; the game sold only 20,000 copies at launch. Thankfully, Ubisoft announced that it would be picking up the publishing rights here in the States, so we urge you: Support a talented game developer and go buy this game. Now.

Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Q Entertainment **Release** Spring



HEAD
Samurai Drive
R Arm
Seven Man Slice
L Arm
Linear Mortar Gun
Chest
Laserproof Shield
Legs
P-DEF
E-DEF

RENGOKU: THE TOWER OF PURGATORY

This Japanese PSP title will also be winging its way across the ocean and landing on American soil. *Rengoku* is an action-RPG that places you in the guise of an android who must make his way through a futuristic landscape and up the tower of the game's title to confront the requisite mysterious enemy. As you go, you'll be able to upgrade your skills and gain new weapons and technologies, which you'll then put to the test as you slug it out against the foes you encounter—it seems rather like a dungeon crawler that's set in a sci-fi world. There's also a multiplayer mode with up to four players in which you play king of the mountain on top of the Tower of Purgatory.

We must confess that this game doesn't really do much to excite us, but it may fill the control-a-giant-metal-object void for those who aren't car fanatics.

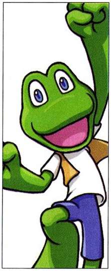
Pub. Konami **Dev.** Hudson Soft **Release** Spring

IN THE PIPELINE

GRAND THEFT AUTO

Pull out your miniature baseball bats and crowbars: Rockstar has announced that its signature franchise will indeed be making an appearance on PSP. And that's about all we know about the game as of press time. However, we're fairly certain that for fans of the series, the fact of its existence is all they need to know to be sold.

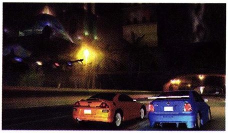
Pub. Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar North **Release** Spring



FROGGER

Give me an "F"! Gimme an "R"! Gimme an "O"! Gimme a...OK, that's about all the enthusiasm we can muster up for Konami's announcement that the little green guy will be making an appearance on PSP this fall. While it has yet to show gameplay footage for PSP, we're going to go out on a limb and predict that it will involve frogs hopping their way to safety.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami CE Hawaii **Release** Fall



MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

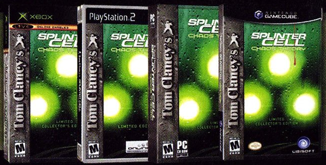
Now you'll be able to take your rims on the road with you. Want to know more about it? Well then, check out the preview for the PS2 version on page 50—Rockstar says that the PSP version will be a pretty straightforward port of its big brother. Just promise us you won't play aggro mode while simultaneously driving your car down the freeway.

Pub. Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar San Diego **Release** Spring

EVEN MORE CARS

While neither has been confirmed for release in the United States yet, it seems a fairly safe bet that *Colin McRae Rally 2005* and *TOCA Race Driver 2* will both find their way here within the year, giving racing fans even more reason to leap onto the portable bandwagon.

CHAOS IS A DROP AWAY.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Violence

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DEAL WITH IT

KUTARAGI COMMENTS ON PSP DEFECTS

While the PSP launch in Japan was largely considered a huge success, it hasn't been without some problems. Early on, complaints ranged from dead pixels and defective analog nubs to the system randomly ejecting the UMD during gameplay. However, the biggest issue was the defective Square button, which would often be unresponsive or simply wouldn't work at all. This issue reportedly caused almost 5,000 people to send their PSPs back to Sony. Japanese publication *Nikkei Business* is reporting that approximately 6 percent of the 800,000 PSP units sold in Japan (as of press time) have been returned due to defects.

So why all the issues with the Square button? Because it is placed right next to the screen, the mechanics that it controls are actually situated slightly to the right of the button rather than directly underneath it. Ken Kutaragi, the president of Sony Computer Entertainment, said in an interview with *Nikkei Business* that it was necessary for the Square button to sit so closely to the screen so that the designers of the unit didn't have to sacrifice any screen size to compensate for button placement. Doing so would either make the unit larger or make the screen smaller, two things Kutaragi wanted to avoid in the final design of the system. It's currently not known if Sony has taken steps to correct some of these issues in the hardware before its North American release, so you may want to think about buying one of those extended warranties when you go to pick up your own PSP on March 24. «

While 48,000 defective PSPs may seem like a lot, it doesn't even compare to the 2004 recall of 150 million pieces of vending-machine-distributed jewelry (thanks to high levels of lead).

THE OUTSIDER

IRON CHEF AMERICA AND THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY

ROBIN WILSON is lead singer for the Gin Blossoms and and enjoys physics and cooking shows. Find him on 1UP at theoutsider.1UP.com.

Spike TV respects gamers...a little. It respects us because it knows we exist in vast, Fremen-like numbers and that we can screw the network if we hate what it does with our beloved games. While we represent a huge honey pot of viewers, Spike TV is understandably nervous when going out on a limb for an untested and misunderstood audience.

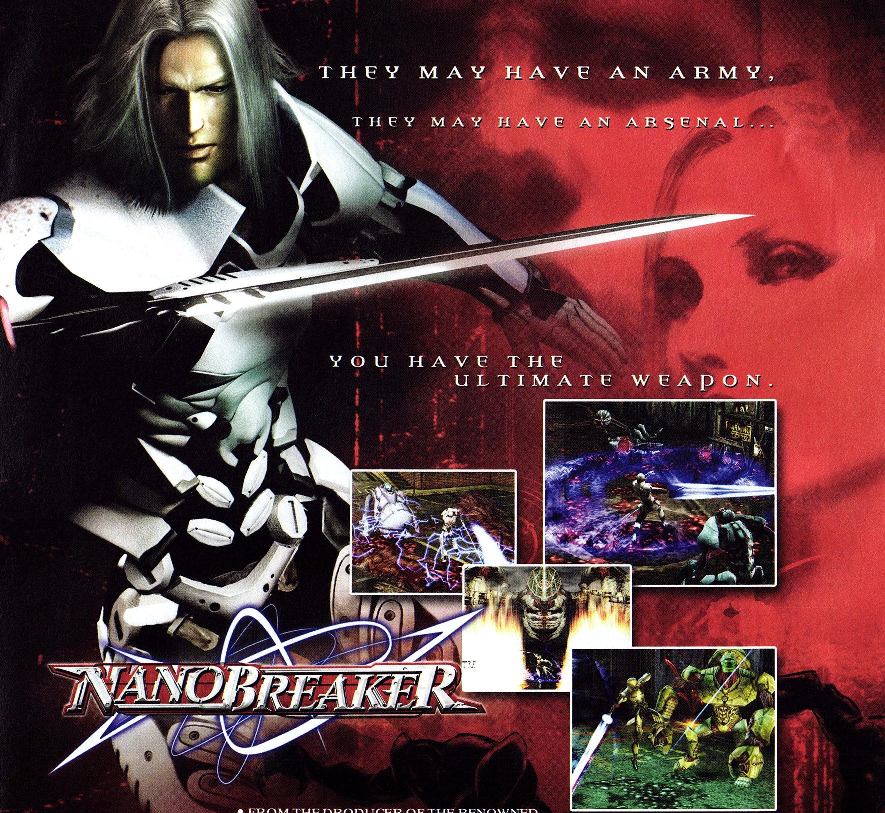
The 2004 Spike TV Video Game Awards did a respectable job of relating gamers' actual preferences to a mass TV audience. Sure, it was awkward and cheesy, but no more so than any other awards show. And by developing two weekly series aimed at gamers, Spike TV demonstrates that it is the first major network (sorry, G4) to take us seriously. Its gaming-oriented programs include *V-Spot*—a standard previews show with passable but qualified commentary—and the reality/fantasy series *The Ultimate Gamer*. This latter one is cool, but it's just *Pimp My Ride* with videogames.

Obviously, Spike TV knows we're here and wants us watching, but it still doesn't fully trust us. I believe I am qualified to make this assessment because I recently had the opportunity to pitch a TV show concept to some Spike TV executives. It was (and still is) my concept for a show that gamers will actually care about. The meeting went well, the execs were cool, and they admitted that they have been looking for ways to bring videogames to television. But I was informed that my idea, though promising, was ultimately too expensive to produce.

Too expensive? Well, I can accept that. These things, like everything else, are relative. But then I stumbled across the Food Network's *The Making of the Iron Chef America*, and I couldn't help but marvel at the investment made in its production. Clearly, the Food Network cares way, way more about chefs than Spike TV cares about gamers. Shows like *V-Spot* and *The Ultimate Gamer* are decent enough, but they're relatively easy to produce and represent the minimal risk level that networks are willing to take for us. My concept, while admittedly expensive, would still cost a hell of a lot less than *Iron Chef America*. But as I said, all these things are relative, and it's reasonable to imagine that there are *at least* as many Americans interested in cooking as there are interested in videogames. Maybe my idea is too expensive, and maybe it wouldn't work for other reasons, but then again, maybe Spike TV just didn't like it.

We are to Spike TV what chefs are to the Food Network: We're not the network's only targets, but it sure as hell wants to hit us all. It knows there are 80 million of us, and execs are racking their brains trying to figure us out. What they haven't fully grasped is that they can have us—if they just give us what we really want. «

> SPIKE TV KNOWS WE'RE HERE, BUT IT STILL DOESN'T FULLY TRUST US.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PlayStation 2

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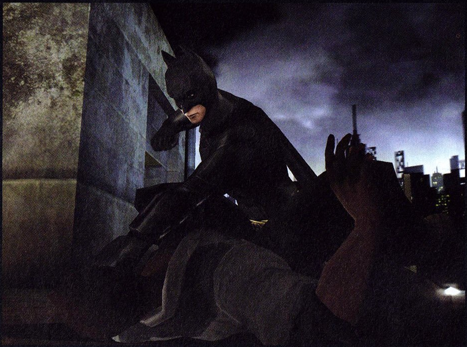

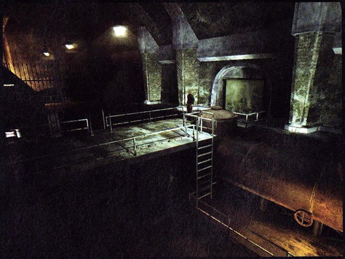

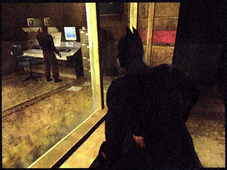

ORIGINS
Bob Kane, the creator of Batman, reportedly drew from three sources of inspiration for his superhero: *The Bat Whisperer*, a 1930s movie about a bat-faced evildoer; a sketch done by Leonardo da Vinci of a man with batlike wings; and masked good guys The Shadow and Zorro.

BATMAN BEGINS

PROVING THAT CRIMINALS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS AND COWARDLY LOT

An easy, and perhaps cynical, way to describe *Batman Begins* is "*Splinter Cell* with tight leather"; that is, some people from the original *Splinter Cell* team are on the project, and it's now a stealth-action game. And once you see the game in action, that's neither an inaccurate nor inappropriate assessment.

Producer Reid Schneider elaborates on the choice of making *BB* a stealth game: "We didn't want to just drop Batman into another brawler; we wanted to have a game that really redefined the essence of Batman, since the movie is itself a redefinition of Batman." To that end, the game emphasizes two things: Batman is "the world's greatest detective," and Batman is a scary fellow.

In any given level, Batman needs to figure out the best way to complete his objective. Helping him along in this task are an extensive inventory and a skill set that is very reminiscent of Sam Fisher's. Batman can saunter, climb, rappel, and crawl with maximum stealth; his famous utility belt sports gadgets like optical cables, batarangs, and a high-frequency bat signaler (think dog whistle, except for bats). One of his best weapons, however, is invisible: He can use fear to cripple his enemies.

The levels themselves are lifted straight from the movie (and embellished a bit) and are actually designed more vertically than most stealth games'—which means Batman can use his skills, tools, and height to position himself for easy eavesdropping or reconnaissance.

Within these levels are goons and the occasional thug. While Batman can see their life bars, awareness cones, and positions on his radar, he can also see their heartbeats—which indicate how scared they are (hardcore gamers can turn these HUD options off). Batman can increase their fear and tension by doing things like calling in bats, destroying things from afar (thank you, destructible environments!), or triggering events, such as freeing crazed inmates in Arkham Asylum. As Batman's foes' fear increases, their ability to put up a fight is hampered, and Batman can swing in and pull off an insane mix of ninjitsu and street brawling to put them down. Or you can forgo the detective work of figuring out how to scare baddies and just go straight for some kick-punch action.

Besides sneaking and punching, Batman gets to haul around Gotham in his Batmobile. Alas, the team is being really sneaky and will only confirm that the Batmobile exists, is playable, and gets itself involved in some vehicular mayhem. If the Batmobile sequences look as promising as the stealth-action parts, then *Batman Begins* might become a prized item in the Batcave, right in between the gigantic penny and the mechanical dinosaur. «

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Eurocom **Release** June

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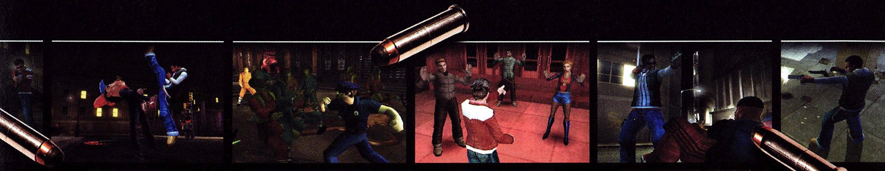

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Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Strong Language
Use of Drugs

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MIDWAY

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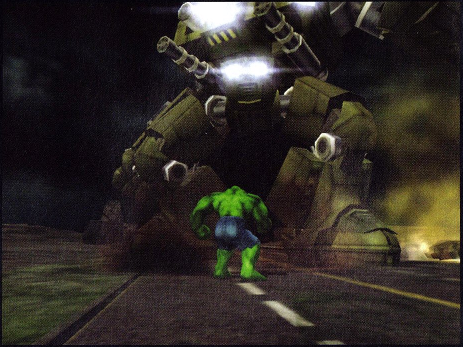
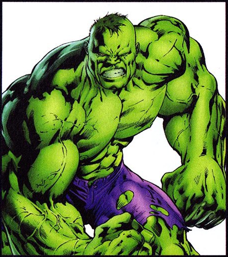
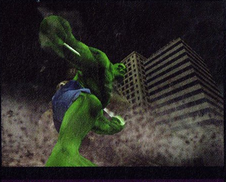






THE HULK COMES WITH A HITCH
The Incredible Hulk's character design is based on the works of comic-book artist Bryan Hitch, who has already reached legendary status with Marvel's *The Ultimates* and *X-Men* and DC's *JLA* and *The Authority.*

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

HULK SMASH...AGAIN

In the summer of 2003, Universal Studios and director Ang Lee delivered a superhero-sized letdown to millions of Hulk fans with a bizarre off-Broadway take on the great green one. Sure there was good smashing, but it was wrapped around a psychological study in anger. Boring!

Vivendi Universal Games, of course, had the game license, with Radical Games (the surprising *Simpsons Hit & Run* and the upcoming *Scarface*) tapped to develop. While certainly no masterpiece, the game that Radical delivered was a fun, competent action-adventure that combined stealth (the Bruce Banner parts) with mayhem (the Hulk parts).

Fast forward two years. Radical (still with publisher VUG) is back with another Hulk game, but things are very different now. There's no new movie upon which to base a game and—let's be clear—Radical is *not* making a sequel. This new effort is based on the *Incredible Hulk* comic books, and gone is the linear and limited play of the first game.

The Hulk game Radical is developing now appears to be the Hulk game we've been waiting for. In the massive free-roaming environments of *The Incredible Hulk: Critical Mass* (working title), our purple-pantsed hero can go just about anywhere and smash just about anything he wants—cars, roadblocks, helicopters, tanks, and even people (well, bad people). He can also destroy *entire buildings* right to the ground.

This new, improved Hulk is more smash-ready than ever, with up to 150 chargeable moves and combos. He can also use any object as a weapon—for example, he can rip a car in half and make metal fists out of it, or use it as a boomerang. He can turn a bus into a giant shield. He's sort of a renaissance Hulk.

The game's "go anywhere" claim is an understatement. The Hulk not only moves around the city- and desert-scapes via his signature jump-that-looks-like-flying bit, but also runs up the sides of buildings. It's a

EXCLUSIVE CHARACTER REVEAL: MERCY

Abigail Mercy Wright, aka Mercy, is one of the super-baddies you'll battle in *The Incredible Hulk*. Her gamma-induced telekinesis lets her manipulate objects that weigh up to two tons. She can also control minds, take on opponents' likenesses and abilities, and fly. Mmmmercy!

CRITICAL MASS

pretty amazing sight to behold.

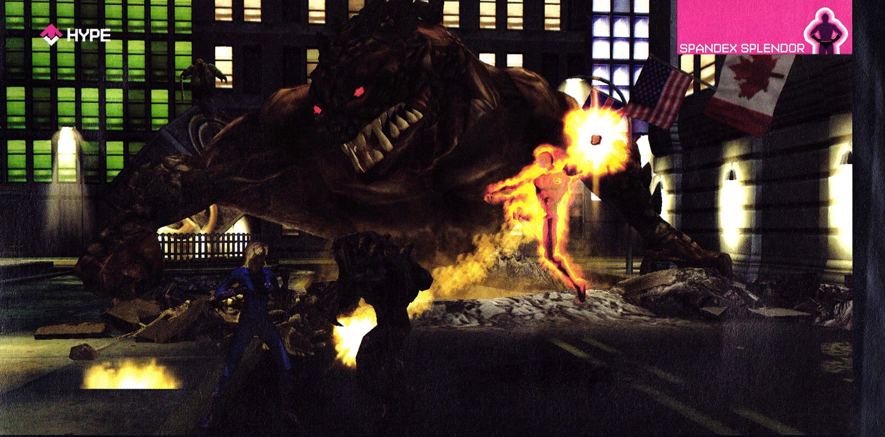
Critical Mass isn't all just smash-and-games, and the team behind it packs its own formidable punch. The story was penned by award-winning Marvel Comics and *Hulk* scribe Paul Jenkins. Character and environment art is based on the work of Bryan Hitch, whose presence in the development is sparking speculation that some of the story line weaves into *The Ultimates* comic series, for which he is best known.

The plot plays out in eight chapters that include over 30 missions and some 50 sub-missions. Story details are sketchy: Something more dangerous than the Hulk is threatening to emerge from Banner, and the plot revolves around having to stop this. This could be in reference to the Devil Hulk, the demonish monster that has so far existed only in Banner's troubled subconscious. Of the six bosses Hulk will encounter, Doc Samson, General "Thunderbolt" Ross in a Hulkbuster, the Abomination and Mercy (see sidebar) have been revealed.

Voice work in *The Incredible Hulk* is backed with some star power: Ron Perlman (best known for his starring role in last year's *Hellboy* and doing the voice of Lord Hood in *Halo 2*) is playing the Abomination. Bruce Banner is voiced by Neil McDonough, currently the star of NBC's *Medical Investigation*; interestingly, he was also the voice of Banner in the short-lived animated series *The Incredible Hulk* (1997-98). The game's soundtrack is being composed by Bill Brown, whose library of gaming work includes *Quake II* and *III*, *Ghost Recon*, *C&C: Generals*, and *Rainbow Six 3*.

Eric Holmes, lead designer for *The Incredible Hulk*, has a stated goal of making the greatest superhero game ever made. Thanks, Eric, but we'll just settle for the best Hulk game ever made. «

Pub. Radical Games **Dev.** Vivendi Universal Games **Release** Fall



BEST MOMENT
The FF's greatest moment isn't when Reed bluffs Galactus with the Ultimate Nullifier. No, it's when Dr. Doom enters a prison triumphantly laughing, realizes that the FF already escaped, and goes "Huh?" in the crap bootleg movie.

FANTASTIC FOUR

MARVEL'S FIRST FAMILY GOES DIGITAL

With its upcoming *Fantastic Four* game, Activision gets to have its proverbial cake and eat it, too. The cake part: Activision has secured the rights to create a game based on the *FF* feature film that's being released this summer by 20th Century Fox. The eat-it-too part: It also has the rights to create games based on the legendary *FF* comic books from Marvel. Fuse the two together and Activision may have the superpower potential to make a movie-based game that can go far beyond just the movie (a limitation, for instance, that EA has yet to overcome with its *LOTR* license).

On the surface, the *FF* game, currently under development by 7 Studios, bears all the trappings of a typical movie game. The characters are drawn directly from the film's main stars—Ioan Gruffudd (pronounced YO-an GRIFF-ith—it's Welsh) as Reed Richards/Mr. Fantastic, Jessica Alba as Sue Storm/Invisible Girl, Michael Chiklis as Ben Grimm/The Thing, Chris Evans as Johnny Storm/The Human Torch, and Julian McMahon as Victor Von Doom—and the story line follows the movie's basic plot.

Dig deeper and you'll find a slick third-person, team-based action-adventure that includes such nonmovie bad guys as *FF* staples Moleman and Diablo, with even more surprises inspired by the *Ultimate Fantastic Four* series, Marvel's popular reimagining of its classic superheroes. Zak Penn, the writer for *X2: X-Men United*, is writing the game's extended story.

Fantastic Four lets you play as any one or all of the *FF* team, with the ability to switch from character to character on the fly as needed. More intriguing is the combo structure that allows two heroes to execute a joint attack, like Sue force-grabbing a baddie and then having Ben pound the bejeepers out of him. Some missions may call for only one hero, and you can imagine the possibilities here: Reed using his stretch power to solve a puzzle, Sue using her invisibility for stealth purposes, Ben going all super-strength crazy on evil minions, and Johnny using his flame powers. Hero powers can be acquired or upgraded throughout the game as heroes accumulate points during missions. For instance, Johnny may learn how to create a small fire barrier, but with enough points he can upgrade that ability to a towering flame. There are some 40 such upgrades for each hero. Multiplayer modes include two-player co-op and four-player head to head in multiple arena battles.

It's good to see Activision taking the *Fantastic Four* license seriously and not tying it into the movie so tightly that a bad box office could undermine what might have been a good game, which is what happened to the *Hulk* game a couple of years ago. And since the *FF* movie is written by screenwriter Michael France, who also wrote the *Hulk* screenplay (and the *Punisher* screenplay, too)…oh, wait just a minute…. «

Pub. Activision **Dev.** 7 Studios **Release** Summer

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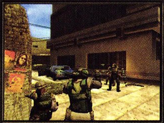

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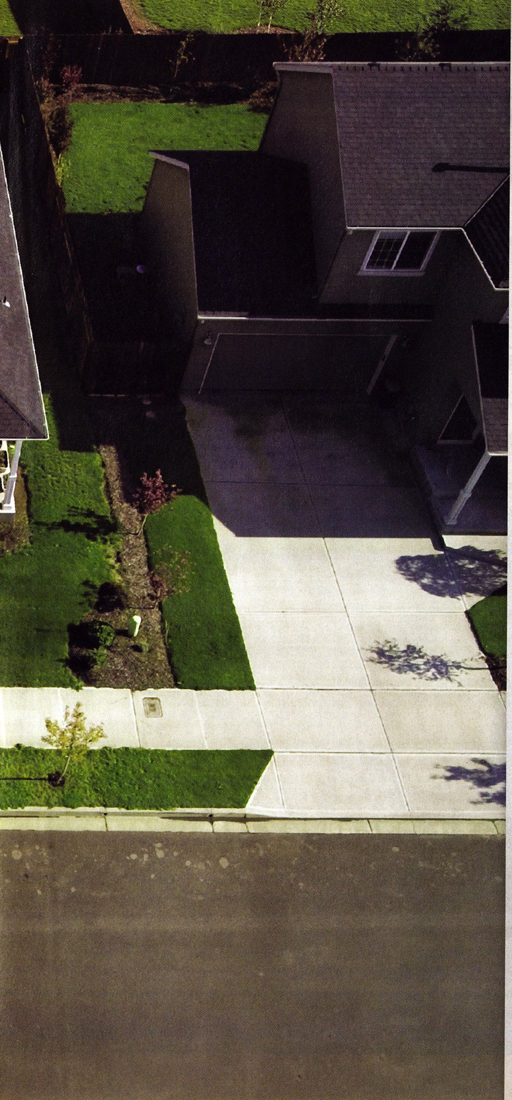

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DATA STREAM

THE NEWS IN BRIEF

HALL OF FAMER

The father of the modern sports game and one of the driving forces behind EA's early success, Trip Hawkins has been inducted into the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences Hall of Fame. Hawkins is responsible for creating the first licensed sports game, featuring basketball legends Dr. J and Larry Bird. He later acquired the services of John Madden for the company's football games. While at EA, Hawkins continued to push the idea of licensed games before leaving the company to found 3DO, where he helped launch the 3DO system. The 3DO never saw widespread success, which forced the company to focus on solely on software publishing. Hawkins joins Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto and *Final Fantasy* creator Hironobu Sakaguchi as members of the Hall of Fame.

FREAKIN' SWEET!

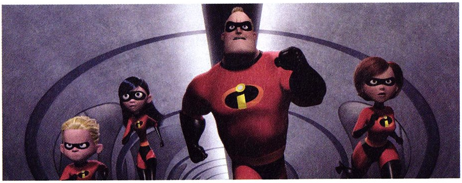
Take-Two Interactive is developing games based on *The Family Guy* license. The game is currently a third-person action-adventure that lets you take on the role of several characters from the show, including Brian the dog and Stewie. The game is scheduled for release in 2006.

INCREDIBLY AWESOME

Don't think just because *The Incredibles* movie has come and gone that there won't be any more games based on the family of superheroes. THQ has announced plans to release yet another game that won't be entirely based on the film, like the first game was, but will feature many of its characters. Heavy Iron Studios will take on the responsibility of developing the game for the PlayStation 2, while Pacific Coast Power & Light will take on the duties of bringing *The Incredibles* to the PSP. Both versions of the game are scheduled for release this fall.

NOT SO GOLDEN

In an effort to ensure greater quality in its games, EA laid off around 60 people in its EALA studios. Originally, it was thought that the *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* and *Medal of Honor: Dogs of War* teams were hit hardest, but the layoffs actually didn't target any specific section of the company, despite the former game's lackluster reception. According to studio General Manager Neil Young, the layoffs were meant to rebalance the studio and to make sure that it was ready to ramp up development for the next generation of consoles.



JAPANTOWN

MORE THAN A PRETTY FACE

ANDREW VESTAL
teaches English in the land of our friends to the East, and he knows a good bargain when he sees one.

Sony doesn't just sell consumer electronics. Sony sells a lifestyle: sleek, sexy, slightly upscale. The simple curves and flat surfaces of the trademark "Sony style" unite Sony's various hardware divisions with a single look. Recently, Sony President Ken Kutaragi trumpeted the merits of the PSP's design, claiming he believed Sony has "made the most beautiful thing in the world." That seems a bit much—but there's no denying that the PSP's smooth exterior is the ultimate expression of Sony's design aesthetic.

The interior of the PSP, however, represents a clean break with years of Sony's technological initiatives. Until recently, Sony's music and media divisions held the most sway within the company. Sony's electronics were built to enforce strong content control, and Sony's executives, controlling everything, felt content. Yet consumers balked at these draconian measures, and Sony's MP3-incompatible music devices floundered in the marketplace for years.

The PSP, in sharp contrast, has been designed to support open hardware and software standards. The PSP connects to a PC or Macintosh with a standard USB cable, not a proprietary Sony one. Save data and media are saved to a Memory Stick Duo—a Sony format, true, but one used in multiple devices and produced by a wide number of third-party manufacturers. Sony executives no doubt hope users watch movies on Sony's UMD discs and listen to music in Sony's ATRAC format. But with the PSP, users have a choice: They can convert their own movies and music to MPEG-4 and MP3, then play them back freely from a memory stick. The PSP also displays digital JPEG photos.

AN OLD ADAGE COMES TO MIND: TRUE BEAUTY LIES WITHIN.

By supporting these open industry standards, Sony has (perhaps inadvertently) created a new console space: legal, enthusiast-created middleware. Though the PSP has been out for only two months, a large number of helpful tools have already been created. A Macintosh utility called iPSP fully integrates the PSP with iPhoto and iTunes. A similar Windows utility automatically resizes JPEG directories and archives to PSP resolution, turning the PSP into the perfect device for viewing photo albums or gray-market manga scans on the go. And with a bit of tweaking, free MPEG-4 conversion utilities offer better video quality and compression rates than Sony's own pay-to-download tool.

One of the strongest advocates for the PSP's support of open standards is Ken Kutaragi himself. Kutaragi openly admits that Sony's prior refusal to support open standards "diluted innovation" but promises that future products will reflect how Sony is "growing up." It would seem that the PSP's still growing; a recently leaked incomplete firmware upgrade revealed that Sony hopes to eventually add e-mail, word processing, Web browsing, scheduling, voice communication, voice-to-text conversion, and music downloads via its SonicStage service. As long as these new capabilities are added in the same spirit as the current ones, it seems likely that a bevy of free third-party middleware will sprout up to enhance them, too.

When Kutaragi called the PSP the "the most beautiful thing in the world," he was referring to its sleek, glossy good looks. But this isn't just skin-deep. Once you start digging into the guts of the PSP and see how it supports widespread, open industry standards, an old adage comes to mind: True beauty lies within. «

Staff Sergeant **Anthony Leavitt.** Specialist **Renny Sotero.** 10th Special Forces Group.

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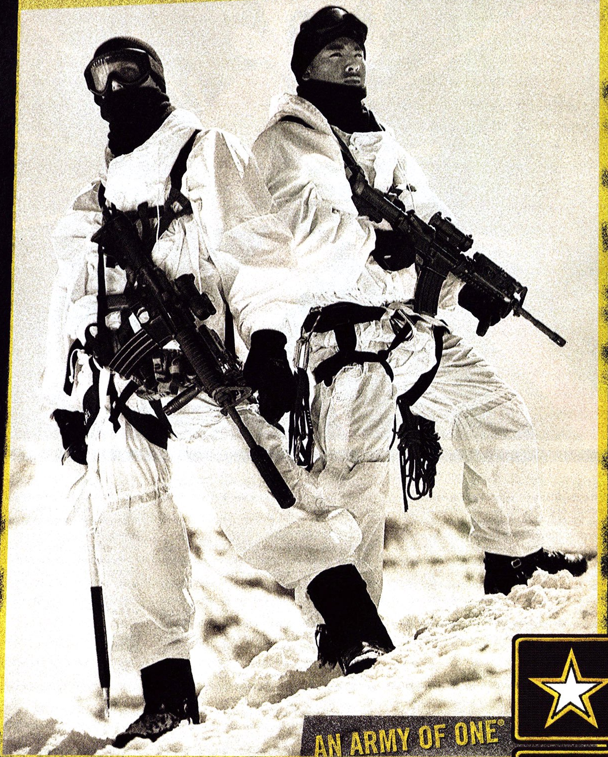

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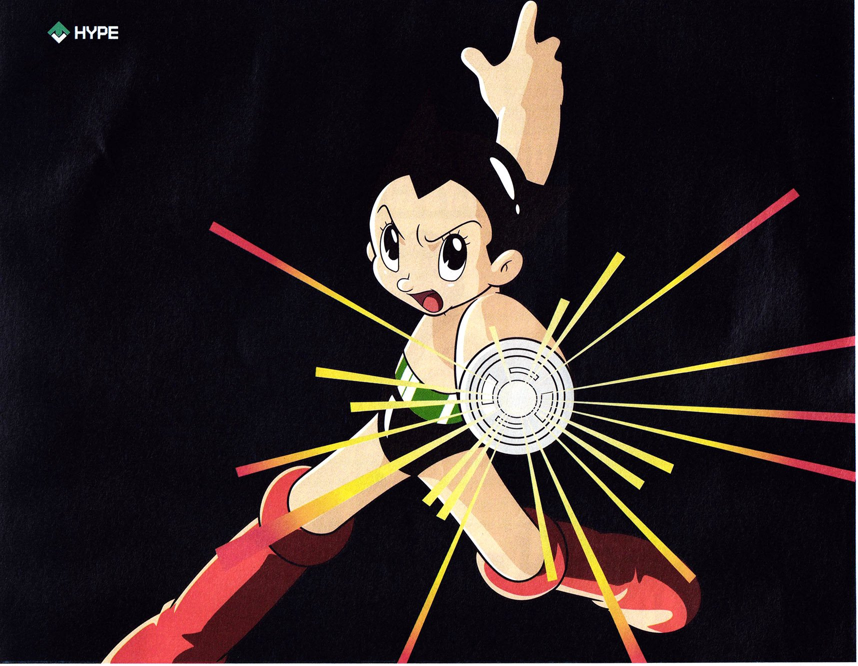

ANIMANIA

100,000 HORSEPOWER KEEPS ON TRUCKING IN THE NEW YEAR

ASTRO SMASH

If the PlayStation 2 game didn't serve up enough *Astro Boy* for you, Columbia will provide a hefty second helping this spring. On March 29, the entire new-school *Astro* series hits DVD in a five-disc special edition containing all the episodes never aired on American television. Only 21 episodes of the 2003 vintage *Astro* revival made it onto the tube over here in the States. Hardcore *Astro* fans will be thrilled to learn that the DVD box set nearly doubles that tally and includes the entire 50-episode run for a cool retail price of (coincidentally) only $50.

CRUSH THEM, GINREI ROBO

After finishing off the DVD release of the *Giant Robo* OVA series (since any discerning fan has already picked that one up by now—the last volume hits March 29), watch out for a side story follow-up coming out in April. On April 12, Media Blasters brings out a single disc with the *Ginrei Special* OVAs, a comedic tangent produced to kill time while the original *Robo* series was in production. If it's not the funniest robot action released in the last 15 years or so, it's at least a top-five contender—a nice break from *Robo*'s hardcore mecha blood and thunder.

OTAKU NO VIDEO 2K5

Del Rey's quiet but high-quality line of manga releases gets an excellent addition on April 26 with the first volume of *Genshiken*, Kio Shimoku's exploration of life and love among Japanese anime and game fans. A more low-key approach than Gainax's famous *Otaku no Video* (which came out in the States in 2003), *Genshiken* follows a college club devoted to the study of "modern visual culture" (i.e., the strange geekish confluence of games, comics, cartoons, and more) and their continuing quest to achieve ever more rarefied heights of fannish obsession. It's funny because it's very true to the fan experience and includes references to real games like *Puyo Pop* and *Guilty Gear*, so grab the comic and look forward to checking out the spin-off TV series that is scheduled to air in the coming year.

KALEIDO SECOND STAGE

After finishing up its first six-disc run, *Kaleido Star* comes back for a second 26-episode series from ADV Films later this spring. Volume one of the *New Wings* series, which features more of the adventures of aspiring fantasy circus star Sora and her fellow Kaleido Stage performing artists, should already be available (having hit shelves March 1). It's another striking creation from the mind of Junichi Sato, who also is the director of the excellent *Princess Tutu*, which is available as well and worth a look.

100,000 HORSEPOWER MEETS 100,000 WATTS

From the new school to the old—continuing its irregular series of DVD releases, AnimEigo recently projected an April launch for the first of six DVDs bringing out the *Urusei Yatsura* OVA series. Each volume will have a pair of classic electric-alien-versus-the-world stories (except for the first, which is a single 60-minute feature), but those who are already hooked on Rumiko Takahashi's much-beloved sci-fi gagfest can purchase the lot in one collector's box. Check out animeigo.com for more details. « *Dave Smith*

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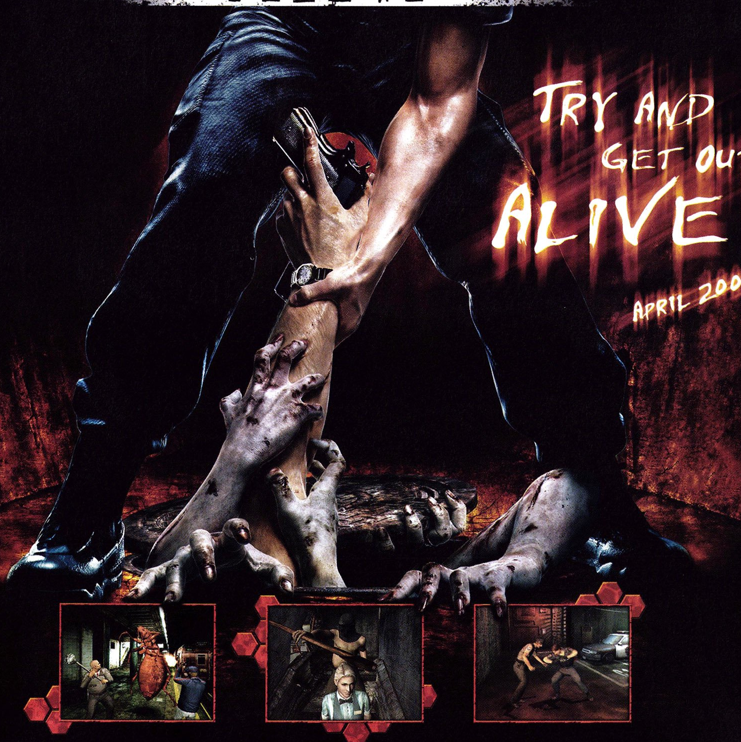

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Online play requires internet connection, Network Adaptor (for PlayStation2) and Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation 2) (each sold separately).

BY THE NUMBERS

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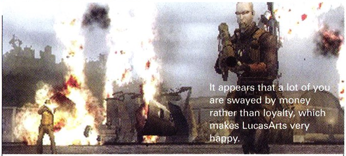
SALES, RENTALS, TRENDS, AND ODDITIES—THE STATS THAT SHAPE YOUR VIDEOGAME WORLD



It appears that a lot of you are swayed by money rather than loyalty, which makes LucasArts very happy.

PS2 TOP 20 SALES

	Title (Publisher)	Score
1	Mercenaries (LucasArts)	●●●●◖
2	Suikoden IV (Konami)	●●●
3	Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (Rockstar)	●●●●●
4	Punisher (THQ)	●●●◖
5	Need for Speed Underground 2 (EA Games)	●●●●●
6	Madden NFL 2005 (EA Sports)	●●●●◖
7	NBA Live 2005 (EA Sports)	●●●●
8	NFL Street 2 (EA Sports Big)	●●●◖
9	The Getaway: Black Monday (Sony CEA)	●●
10	Playboy: The Mansion (Arush Entertainment)	●●
11	World Championship Poker (Crave)	●◖
12	Fullmetal Alchemist (Square Enix)	●●●
13	ESPN NBA 2K5 (ESPN Videogames)	●●●●
14	Call of Duty: Finest Hour (Activision)	●●●●
15	Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (Konami)	●●●●●
16	Winning Eleven 8 International (Konami)	●●●●◖
17	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3 (Atari)	●●●●
18	Katamari Damacy (Namco)	●●●●◖
19	ESPN NFL 2K5 (ESPN Videogames)	●●●●◖
20	DDR Extreme (Konami)	●●●●

1UP'S 10 MOST WANTED PS2 GAMES

1	FF VII: Advent Children	Square Enix
2	GTA: San Andreas	Rockstar
3	Gran Turismo 4	Sony CEA
4	Devil May Cry 3	Capcom
5	NFS Underground 2	EA Games
6	NBA Street V3	EA Sports Big
7	Final Fantasy XII	Square Enix
8	Playboy: The Mansion	Arush Ent.
9	Tekken 5	Namco
10	Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	Konami

JAPAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

1	Gran Turismo 4	Sony CEI
2	Another Century's Episode	Banpresto
3	Radiata Stories	Square Enix
4	Dragon Quest VIII	Square Enix
5	Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	Konami
6	Itadaki Street Special	Square Enix
7	Fu'un Bakumatsuden	Genki
8	Digital Devil Saga: Avatar Tuner 2	Atlus
9	Yoshitsune Eiyuden	From Software
10	Death by Degrees	Namco

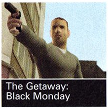
TOP 10 RENTALS, ALL SYSTEMS

1	GTA: San Andreas (PS2)	Rockstar
2	Punisher (PS2)	THQ
3	Mercenaries (PS2)	LucasArts
4	NFL Street 2 (PS2)	EA Sports Big
5	Punisher (XB)	THQ
6	Mercenaries (XB)	LucasArts
7	NFS Underground 2 (PS2)	EA
8	Halo 2 (XB)	Microsoft
9	Call of Duty: Finest Hour (PS2)	Activision
10	The Getaway: Black Monday (PS2)	Sony CEA

TOP 10 SALES, ALL SYSTEMS

1	Resident Evil 4 (GC)	Capcom
2	Mercenaries (XB)	LucasArts
3	Mercenaries (PS2)	LucasArts
4	Legends of Zelda: TMC (GBA)	Nintendo
5	World of WarCraft (PC)	Vivendi Universal
6	Super Mario Brothers 64 (DS)	Nintendo
7	Punisher (XB)	THQ
8	Suikoden IV (PS2)	Konami
9	GTA: San Andreas (PS2)	Rockstar
10	Punisher (PS2)	THQ

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas



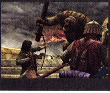
The Getaway: Black Monday

Call of Duty: Finest Hour

Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3

Source: EB Games, January 2005. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff. It's All in Hand sources: Guinness World Records, Dana's head.

TREND SPOTTER



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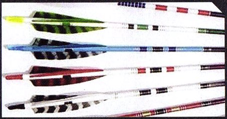
People who are entitled to wear crowns and carry scepters and behead whomever they choose have been scattered throughout our games—we've seen them in *Champions: Return to Arms*, *Katamari Damacy*, *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within*, and *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*.

IT'S ALL IN HAND



19

The record set by Anthony Kelly for number of arrows caught by hand in two minutes.

29

The most points it is possible to earn in a hand of cribbage.

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The number of signs known by Koko, the gorilla most proficient in sign language in the world.

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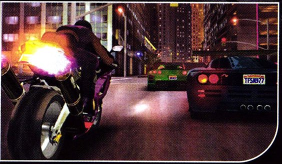

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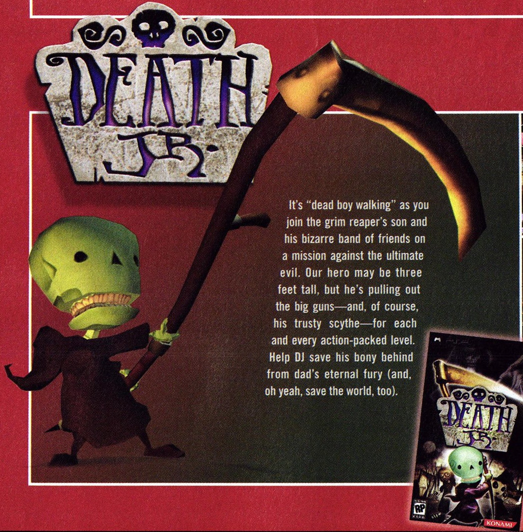
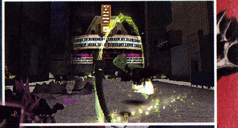
Introducing three amazing new games designed exclusively for the new PSP™ handheld.



It's "dead boy walking" as you join the grim reaper's son and his bizarre band of friends on a mission against the ultimate evil. Our hero may be three feet tall, but he's pulling out the big guns—and, of course, his trusty scythe—for each and every action-packed level. Help DJ save his bony behind from dad's eternal fury (and, oh yeah, save the world, too).



PRODUCTS RANGE FROM RATING PENDING TO MATURE
RP-M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

- Blood
- Language
- Suggestive Themes
- Violence

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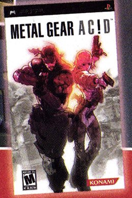
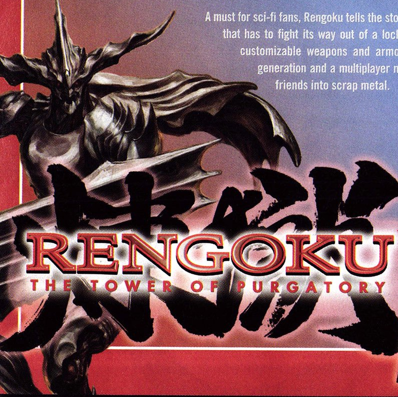
It's an all-new "Gear" for your all-new gear. One of gaming's greatest heroes, Solid Snake, returns in a tactical adventure designed from the ground up to take full advantage of the PSP system's capabilities. With over 200 strategic moves, two playable characters and a wireless play option, Metal Gear Acid is the ultimate stealth trip.





A must for sci-fi fans, Rengoku tells the story of a battle android that has to fight its way out of a locked tower. There are customizable weapons and armor, randomized level generation and a multiplayer mode that lets you turn friends into scrap metal.

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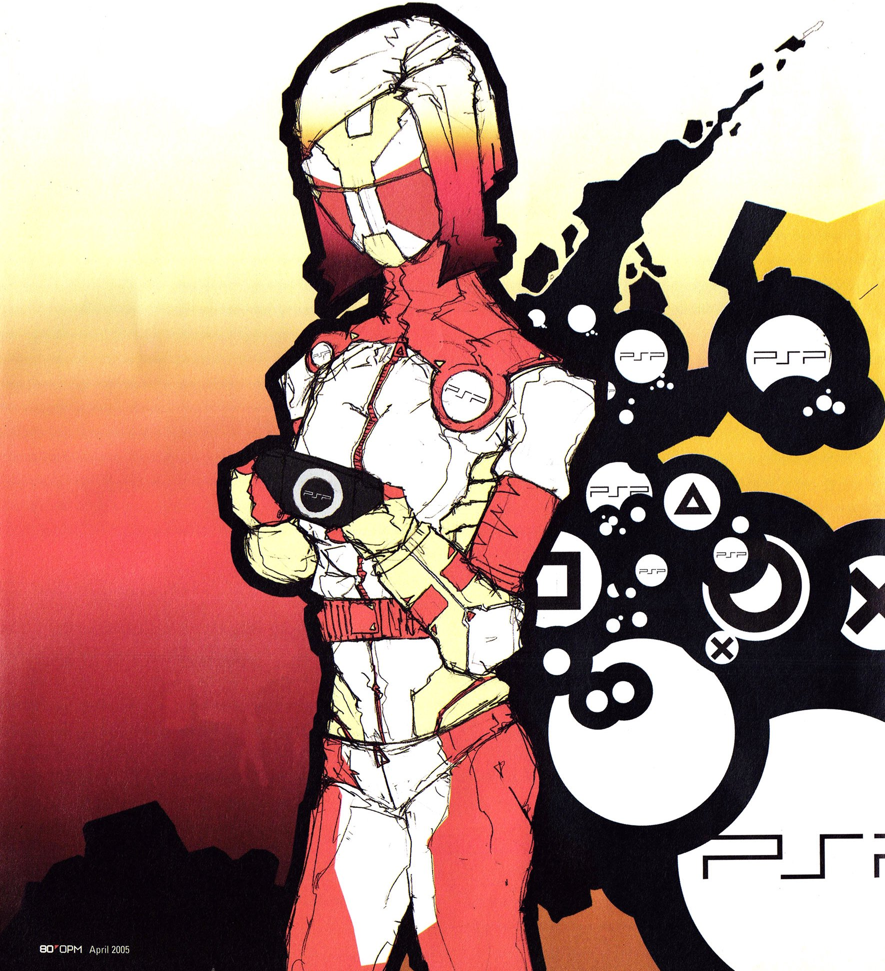
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PSP LAUNCH

DAWN OF A NEW ERA

by Giancarlo Varanini

The revolution will not be televised. On March 24, the foundation of handheld gaming will shake with the arrival of the PSP—not only Sony's first piece of portable gaming hardware, but also the first serious assault on Nintendo's dominance. It will be a three-pronged attack, with games leading the charge.

If it seems like a bold move by Sony, it is. In fact, everything about the PSP is bold. Never before have we seen so much high-tech gaming hardware crammed into such a tiny space—hardware that allows for almost PlayStation 2–quality games. Never before have we had such an enormous and crystal-clear screen that complements the aforementioned hardware so well. Its Wi-Fi capabilities replace the need for umbilical multiplayer gaming and could potentially open a door to handheld gaming experiences that simply were not possible on a large scale with previous iterations of handheld hardware.

Obviously, the PSP isn't all about gaming. While its music- and movie-playing capabilities seem like no real threat to the iPod or other specialty devices at the moment, just imagine how many people will bring their PSPs on a trip in lieu of other hardware because it can do all of these things. Want to watch *Spider-Man 2,* listen to a new album, or do some reading (yes, even reading)? Bring your PSP.

PSP
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THE PLAN

MAKING THE PSP A REALITY

It's not easy to launch a new piece of hardware, let alone one that promises to change the face of handheld gaming. Kaz Hirai, president and COO of Sony Computer Entertainment America, is leading the charge and hopes that the PSP will change not only the way we play games on the go, but also the way we think about portable entertainment.

OPM When did Sony, as a company, say this is a market to get into—this is something significant.
KAZ HIRAI Let me take one step back from there. We looked at what we've accomplished since the launch of the original PlayStation and the PlayStation 2, and we've obviously built a huge bond with consumers over the past 10 years. We felt that the timing was right, from both the relationship we have with the consumers and also from a technological standpoint, to bring [out] a handheld device that would revolutionize the way people enjoy entertainment on the go just as much as we revolutionized a lot of things when the original PlayStation came out in 1994 in Japan. Talks started, and Kutaragi-san started thinking about this before the E3 of 2003 when he was up onstage talking about his vision for the PSP. It's been about a year and a half or two years in the making, but again, the timing was right based on our relationship with consumers and [from] a technological standpoint.

What we didn't want to do was try to muscle into the handheld gaming market. That's a market that's already been established, and we've never been about muscling into new markets. We want to create a new market for the consumer and for the industry as a whole.

OPM You mentioned the "handheld gaming ghetto" at CES. We won't make the direct connection, but how do you view the Nintendo market and how much of a factor is it?
KH It's no secret that the handheld gaming market has been around for a really long time, and Nintendo's had a lot of devices that cater to that particular market—specifically the games market. They've had add-ons in the past that you can connect to your Game Boy Color or Game Boy Advance, such as cameras and printers, but at the core, they're still just handheld gaming devices. What we wanted to create was a device that would certainly play games—that's our core focus—but we're not satisfied with just that. We want to create a completely different market or expand the portable entertainment market by using games as a catalyst. That's why we wanted to make sure the screen had a high resolution that would make it a compelling entertainment option. It will make you want to watch a movie on it or do a slide show of your photos. It's a compelling music-playing device as well. We're making sure the PSP isn't stuck being a competitor to Nintendo or anybody else.

OPM So keeping all of that in mind, who do you see as the typical PSP consumer?
KH Just as we had a wide demographic for the PlayStation and PS2, the PSP is going to appeal to a wide demographic across a variety of different ages and [attract] a high female-and-male ratio as well. If you look at the form-factor, I have no problem taking out my PSP if I'm flying to San Francisco, New York, or Tokyo and want to watch a movie. There are some devices out there that I'd be a little embarrassed to pull out, especially now that I have so much gray hair. We designed the PSP so that it would be a fashion statement. We want to appeal to a wide demographic and not just the teenager demographic.

OPM Was the iPod a factor in any of this?
KH In an indirect way. The iPod is a handheld entertainment device. The DS is a handheld entertainment device. There are a lot of different MP3 players out there and portable DVD players out there as well. So from that perspective, anything that gives users the option of being entertained on the go falls in that category, so books and laptops are also in that cate-

gory. If you're asking me what is a direct competitor to the PSP, it's everything that can entertain when you're on the go.

OPM What about the price? How much discussion went into hitting the right price point?
KH I looked at the North American market and wanted to bring what I thought was the most compelling value proposition to the North American consumers. I came to the conclusion that since it's a handheld device, you probably want a case to carry it around in, you probably want a memory stick to save your game data, and you're most likely going to buy accessories anyway. So for the North American market, I wanted it to be a one-stop solution right out of the box. You get everything you need, plus a demo disc and a movie—one of the most popular movies of 2004—right out of the box. We wanted to make it compelling, and I think the $249 price tag does just that.

OPM The general sentiment is that the PSP is a stopgap to the transition from the PS2 to the PS3, but it seems like you're going for a totally different audience here.
KH I don't know that it's a different audience, but I think it's opening a market that overlaps different audiences that enjoyed the PlayStation and PlayStation 2, and we want to expand on that. When we embark on a platform launch that involves not only SCEA but also Sony corporately and all of the publishing and developing community, we don't do it as a stopgap to anything. This is a serious endeavor with a serious vision of wanting to expand entertainment in the portable space.

OPM What's been the reaction from movie and music studios?
KH They've been very enthusiastic and positive. We want a lot of the studios to bring out their hit titles on UMD for retail release. Look for releases coming from us or other motion picture studios, or perhaps even jointly. We want to get all of our ducks in a row before we start announcing retail merchandising and all those kind of things.

OPM Is there a role for Sony Connect?
KH I think there is a role in as far as it's Sony's download service. They have a proprietary encoder called ATRAC, which the PSP supports, so consumers will be able to use the *Sonic Stage* software to download the files right onto their PSP. The software supports MP3 as well. Obviously, I would like to make sure that if consumers are looking for a music download service that they view Sony Connect as one of their primary options.

OPM Are there plans to expand the PSP's features to include e-mail, Web browsing, and other options that are normally found in PDAs?
KH I got this question a lot with the PS2 as well. At the end of the day, it's really up to the software creators. If they think that Web browsing is something that's going to be compelling as part of a game or what have you, then I'm sure someone will bring it out. I'm not exactly sure that you'd want to browse the Web or do anything that you could do with a laptop, and maybe I'm wrong. But the possibilities are pretty much endless. If you need a soft keyboard or a keyboard that plugs into the USB, then you can do that as well.

OPM Is there any concern that the PSP could potentially cannibalize support for the PS2 and the PS3 since development budgets are getting to be so high and it's cheaper to develop for the PSP?
KH I'm not exactly sure about next-generation home consoles. Certainly, each of the publishing companies has different strategies for how they want to maximize their bottom line. What I can say is that what we're trying to do is provide the largest installed base of any platform so we can give publishers the option to focus their product strategies more on the PSP than on the PS2 or vice versa. So far, in my conversations with the publishing community and looking at the support we have for the PSP, there's a testament to the enthusiasm for the platform, but it doesn't mean they're going to scale back PS2 development. I think we're growing the development base as opposed to dealing with something where if you do two for PSP, you're taking away one from PS2. I don't see that happening.

OPM So, in theory, the PSP could be a primary Sony platform?
KH It will become a primary Sony platform for portable entertainment. We obviously have a 10-year heritage now in home consoles as well, so I don't see the PSP becoming primary and I don't see the PS2 being primary. Now we have two platforms, one for the home and the other portable, so I think they'll be complementary.

OPM Is the PSP on a separate track from the PS2? Meaning, will we see a PSP 2 alongside new versions of home hardware?
KH It's on a separate track in that what we want to accomplish is somewhat different for inside the home as compared to what we want to do outside the home. They're both in the same vision of [us] wanting to provide compelling entertainment platforms to consumers with games at the core. So you'll see something like *SOCOM* for PS2 and *SOCOM* for PSP—the games would be complementary to each other, so you clear a level on the PSP, bring it back, and hook it up to your PS2. If you're talking about the evolution of the hardware, we haven't even launched in North America, so it would be kind of hard to talk about PSP 2. But again, we're trying to establish the de facto handheld format in the UMD, so there are certainly different possibilities. It will start out with the PSP, but who knows what the format will evolve into.

"WE DIDN'T WANT TO MUSCLE IN ON THE HANDHELD GAMING MARKET."

OPM Will the rental business have any impact on the PSP?
KH I think that just as much as the PlayStation 2, with its DVD functionality, increased the install base of DVD players and DVD playback in America and especially in Japan, the rental chains will see that the [UMD] install base has ramped up quickly. And so long as the rights holders see that as an opportunity for additional revenue, I don't see why UMD discs featuring motion pictures wouldn't be placed at Blockbuster or other rental chains. If the business is there, I'm sure people will get into it.

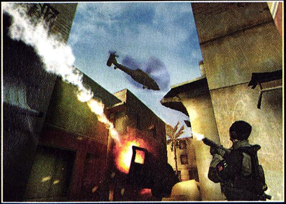
OPM What would surprise you six months from now in terms of consumer reaction?
KH Right now, I'm focused on trying to get it out in North America, and my expectation is that, just like it has in Japan, it will be a huge hit, starting with the core gaming audience. It will expand quickly with the support from the motion picture studios and the music companies as well. I really can't foresee any surprises except, of course, to say this is the first time this kind of device has been introduced to the North American market and I have a lot of high hopes for it.

OPM Can you comment at all on the potential for homebrew projects? Will you let it happen, or will you crack down on it?
KH It's hard to tell at this point in time. What we want to establish first is a solid market, and if we look at the market three years from now, we may look at that. But right now we're trying to establish a market through software that's available and copyright-protected materials that can be downloaded onto the memory stick. If you're talking about homebrew in terms of games, I wouldn't rule it out completely in the future.

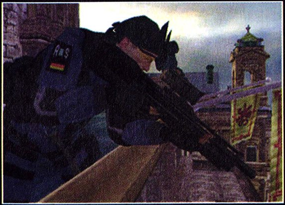
CONNECTIVITY CORNER

While the idea of connectivity certainly isn't a new one, it seems to take on a whole new dimension with the PSP. Since the hardware is so powerful, developers could potentially create some awesome new features with it and breathe some life back into the PS2 hardware.

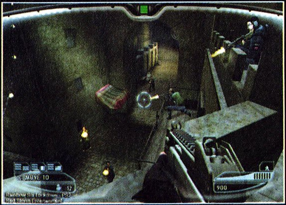
CALL IT A FR



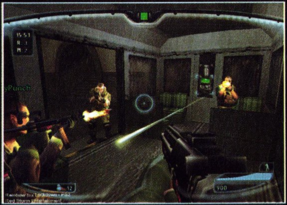
Hunt and be hunted by aggressive AI that homes in on the slightest sound.



New dual gameplay: Play as the lead operative or cover from above as the elusive sniper.



Employ night vision and motion-sensing goggles to detect the threat - before it detects you.



Challenge friends to operative-vs.-mercenary firefights in the PlayStation®2 Rivalry mode.

...a cheery online **battle** with a few of your closest pals. You **hunt** down a few terrorists, blow off some heads with your sniper rifle, and use night vision to **stalk** each other in the dark. In the world of Rainbow Six, only one **rule** of friendship applies: watch your **back** if you want to get out alive.

MATURE 17+
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Language
Violence

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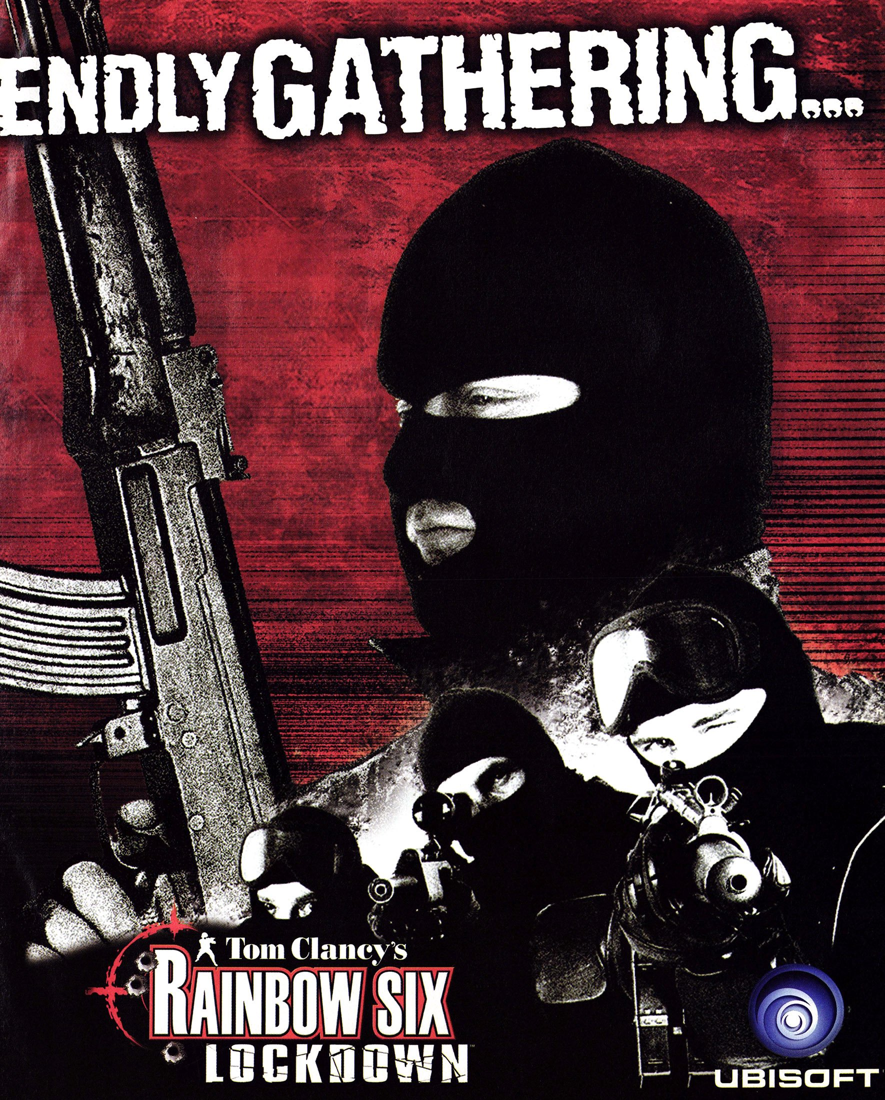
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8 OF
366
LAP
1 OF 3

THE VISION
DEVELOPERS TALK FRANKLY ABOUT PSP

Even with all of the power the PSP has, none of it would matter without the support of developers. Thankfully, all of the major players have jumped on board and are producing, in some cases, multiple games for the PSP due out this year. We spoke with several prominent development houses to get their thoughts on the PSP's design and how the portable system will affect handheld gaming as we know it.

It was love at first sight for many. "The first time I saw a picture of [the PSP] was when Kutaragi-san showed some concept drawings, and it was like, 'Sweet! Just build that and it'll be a winner,'" says Warren Wall, vice president and executive producer at EA Canada. "Then I saw the real device at E3 last year, and the screen stole the show: bright, crisp, and big enough to draw you right in to the experience. Holding one in your hands the very first time, you just know they hit the design right on the nose—there isn't a nicer package of technology anywhere on the market today."

Indeed, the first time most people laid eyes on the sleek design of Sony's new handheld system, the screen immediately grabbed their attention. "I couldn't believe the clarity of the screen," says PJ Snavely, producer at 989 Sports. "The display was unlike anything I'd seen from something that wasn't a plasma TV or computer monitor." Hideo Teramoto, associate producer of Namco's *Ridge Racer* on PSP, agrees. "The first unit we saw was a prototype. The large liquid crystal display showing a movie trailer totally blew our minds. At that moment, I realized that no visual compromise would be allowed in developing *Ridge Racer*."

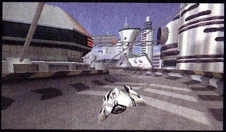
For some, the PSP's design meant much more. It was almost a sign that it was time for the handheld-gaming industry to grow up. "I thought it looked very modern, stylish, and sophisticated—much more so than any handheld entertainment system that had come before it," says Shawn Torin Rettig, associate producer on *Ape Escape*. "It looked mature, like it should be taken seriously, and [like] something far beyond a device that only kids and gamers would use."

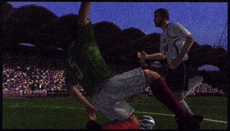
But as the saying goes, it's what's inside that counts. The PSP's technical capabilities were already impressive when the device was first announced, but there was still some concern from developers that the first incarnation of the specifications just wouldn't be enough for them to do the types of games they had in mind. "From reading the specifications originally, we thought there might be some challenges for game development," says 989's Snavely. EA Canada's Wall explains further: "In terms of raw power, it was more than enough to match current consoles but seemed oddly underequipped in RAM memory—it was announced as 8MB in early spec releases. That was clearly going to be the limiting factor, so we pushed Sony to reconsider. Our hope was for at least 16MB, but then they went and surprised us again with 32MB."

Still, the PSP hardware is the most powerful ever designed for a handheld unit, and that was enough. "My initial reaction was pleasant surprise," says Colin Berry, designer on *Wipeout Pure* at Sony Studio Liverpool. "As a designer, one of my concerns was how many buttons the PSP would have, rather than how many polygons it could throw around. Fortunately, it has not disappointed in either respect. The analog stick was perhaps the only element that took a little time to get used to controlwise. As for the technical specifications, they are closer to PlayStation 2 than PlayStation, which is fantastic."

Indeed, it's somewhat of a shock that we are already seeing games that surpass the visual quality offered by the PS1 and in some cases match the quality of early PS2 games. It's about time handheld gaming moved to the forefront with its console brethren instead of staying behind in the shadows where it has remained since its inception. "The typical gameplay style should not always be where users sit in front of a TV for hours and just keep moving their fingers to move a game controller. I think many users prefer to play high-quality-graphics games more easily, anytime, and anywhere for a short time. I believe this easy play style is better suited for our modern life cycle," says Katsumi Yokota, concept planner and art director behind the hypnotic puzzle game *Lumines*. "I consider it a 'healthy computer game.'"

With that in mind, developers have to start thinking differently about their portable games since they have the ability to essentially port console projects. Surprisingly, most of them are embracing the idea that handheld games absolutely require certain features to truly make them worthwhile





on-the-go experiences, but the first thing to do is identify those features. "Developers definitely have to be aware of what kind of platform they are developing for. I know that there are gamers who would play a 60-plus-hour RPG on a handheld, but most people wouldn't. They also don't want to have to read a lot of text or spend too much time getting in and out of the game," says *Ape Escape*'s Rettig. "The most successful games will be those that are easy to understand and play, and fast to get in and out of. A detailed flight simulator or a text-intensive and highly involved RPG or adventure game would probably not be ideal for a handheld. However, puzzle games, action games, racing games, and sports games are obviously better suited to a fast and fun portable gaming experience."

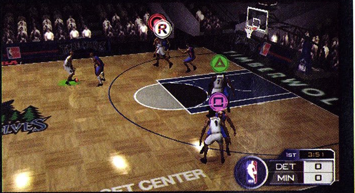
The next step for developers is to focus on the PSP's features and find out how the game can be manipulated to take advantage of them. "There have been different requirements for arcade and console games in the history of the *Ridge Racer* franchise," says Namco's Teramoto. "For our game, we naturally tried to come up with a game suited for a portable unit. We implemented many handheld-specific features, such as a more advanced autosave; 'custom tour,' where a series of races will be created automatically based on a specified period of time; and an audio/video player, where users can enjoy music from the game." Electronic Arts took a similar approach with its games. Says Wall: "We've started with games that are already successful on other platforms, so our ideas are about making games playable on the smaller screen while adding extra value. I don't think it's possible to be successful on a handheld platform without putting a lot of thought behind specifics for the hardware. Designs need to consider detail visibility, object lighting, visual cues, and control differences. When we started work on *Need for Speed Underground Rivals*, we had to carefully consider what worked and what didn't work on the small screen. The differences are subtle, but it would be immediately clear why we made the changes once they were pointed out. Almost any genre and any idea can work on the PSP if you carefully consider these issues."

This formula of targeting specific parts of the hardware has also helped *Wipeout Pure* earn a distinct position in the launch lineup. "We had always thought *Wipeout* would make a fantastic handheld game, so when the PSP came along and we had the chance to make a handheld version, I was delighted," says Sony Studio Liverpool's Berry. "We did not just jump into it blindly, though; initially, we had to work out in what ways the game needed adapting to make the move from console to handheld. Once we had identified those areas, we looked at ways the game could benefit from being on the PSP—for example, the use of Wi-Fi. The obvious benefit of Wi-Fi is wireless multiplayer gaming, but we tried to look beyond—to maximize the functionality—so we made a decision very early on to include downloadable content of some sort. This aspect grew and grew and is something we are very proud of. As far as we are aware, *Wipeout Pure* will be the first PSP title to support downloadable content, and we have not just tagged it on in a small way. The amount of downloadable content is huge, and we feel we are setting a benchmark for future games that go down the path of downloadable content."

"SUCCESSFUL GAMES WILL BE FAST TO GET IN AND OUT OF."

Obviously, developers can take a slightly different approach with completely original games, but the same general thought process is still there. "Since I recognized the PSP as 'visual Walkman' hardware, I wanted to create a puzzle game using music," says *Lumines*' Yokota. "Starting from this initial thought, I came up with the puzzle-game idea of combining horizontal moves like [those of] a sequencer and vertical moves [dependent on] gravity. Together with the PSP's wide screen, we successfully created a very unique 'long sideways puzzle game' that can only be realized on the PSP. Everything evolved around the PSP hardware."

Even with all the praise for the hardware, some things could've been changed or added to make the PSP an even better machine. "Durability and reliance are the things any portable console must keep at a high level. For PSP, I was very surprised at how small and light it was consider-



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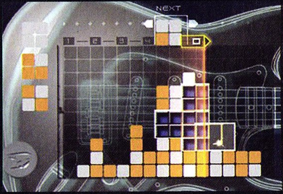

POWER PLAY

Different games require different amounts of power from your PSP's battery. Something simple, like *Lumines*, won't drain your battery quite as fast as a game like *Ridge Racer* because it isn't pushing the PSP hardware. Good thing *Lumines* is one of the best PSP launch games.

ing its high specs," says Yokota. "But because of that, it looked very delicate at the same time. Also, I'm worried about the fact that PSP's memory stick can only take a small amount of memory. I think it could be a bottleneck for users to use this hardware freely, creatively, and efficiently. If we can use a large-volume internal hard drive or rewritable UMD or if a large-volume memory stick becomes much cheaper, PSP could become as popular as the iPod."

The desire for a hard drive isn't uncommon among developers. "There are a few features I would add, though the size of the machine would increase a hell of a lot," says *Wipeout*'s Berry. "I'd have liked it to have a microphone built in and also a small hard drive—4GB would suffice."

Some desired changes are a little less obvious than others. "The UMD data transfer rate is slower than we would like," says EA Canada's Wall. "They gave us all this memory to work with, but it takes at least twice the time to fill with data off the disk compared to DVD. We've spent an inordinate amount of time tweaking and tuning to get load times to an acceptable level. It's going to present limitations in future designs for more massive open-world concepts. I'd also like to see a second analog nub to facilitate control in some of our sports and FPS games."

Karthik Bala, CEO of Vicarious Visions (the team behind *Spider-Man 2* for PSP), seconds the idea of more control. "A second analog nub could enable 3D games to have independent camera controls, for example. A faster CPU would have also been nice, but this can be a challenging thing to do for a handheld, as the battery life is precious."

Despite these minor quibbles, it's pretty hard to deny Sony got it right. The design is sleek and the hardware is powerful. Whether it will truly usher in a completely new era of gaming depends on consumer reaction, but developers are optimistic. "Nintendo started the change when they made the SP version of the GBA. For the first time it didn't feel like a kids' toy, and it was much more acceptable for adults to whip one out in public and play a game," says EA's Wall. "Now when I pull out my PSP—I imported a Japanese one—in public, it attracts awe and admiration from kids and adults alike. Then they see the visuals and can't believe this quality could come in such a small package. Without a doubt, this is going to change the perception of what handheld games are all about."

Not everyone shares the same view. "With current specs, I'm not sure if PSP could change people's view of portable gaming," says Yokota. "However, if it becomes able to connect to the Internet or download games as I mentioned earlier, people might see it as not just a game console but a portable unit that handles any kind of information. There is no other portable unit with a large and beautiful liquid crystal panel—PSP could become an all-purpose portable console."

If the PSP doesn't cause Sony's intended shock wave, there's still sentiment that it will attract a new audience to handheld gaming. "I think it will certainly make handheld gaming look more attractive simply from the look of the games," says Sony Studio Liverpool's Berry. "People who have previously dismissed handheld gaming will take an interest once they are exposed to the PSP. Whether or not it will change people's views wholesale, I don't know. I've always thought it odd that some people can be into games yet not have an interest in handhelds; perhaps the PSP will be the machine that convinces more people to try handheld gaming and makes them realize it can be easily as enjoyable as console gaming.

"FOR THE FIRST TIME, [A HANDHELD] DIDN'T FEEL LIKE A KIDS' TOY."

"I think handhelds have suffered in some ways," Berry continues, "as the games have never looked as good as the console games of the time irrespective of how they play. People generally form their first impression from visuals, and maybe some gamers have turned a blind eye to handhelds because of this. Having said that, the success in the past of the Game Boy has shown there is a large market for handheld gaming; I think the PSP shows that handheld games can now compete with console games in terms of looks and overall quality. So, perhaps the PSP will break down a few barriers for people who have dismissed it in the past."

UNLEASH YOUR INNER DEMON

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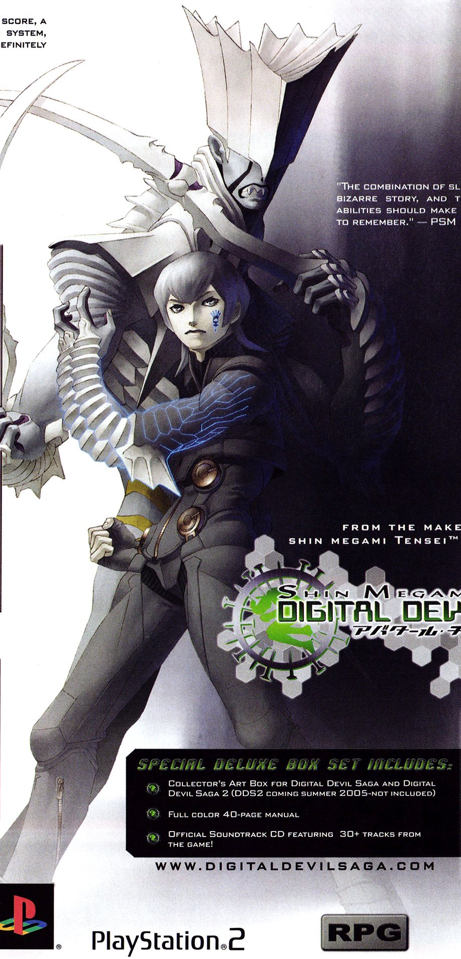
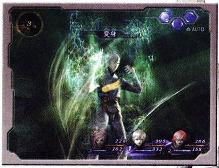


"THE COMBINATION OF SLICK GRAPHICS, BIZARRE STORY, AND TRANSFORMING ABILITIES SHOULD MAKE THIS AN RPG TO REMEMBER." — PSM



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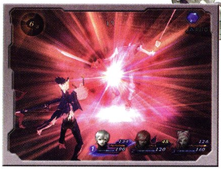

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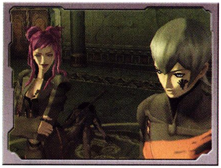

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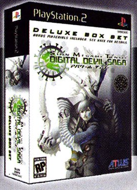

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Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Language
Sexual Themes
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PlayStation®2

RPG

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HOW TO...

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PSP

2814
HOME
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PUT MOVIES ON YOUR MEMORY STICK

This is probably the trickiest feature to use on the PSP, but it's well worth it if you want a decent catalog of movies to watch while traveling. This also may be the only way you'll get to watch some of your favorite films since it may take a while for movie studios to release them on UMD.

STEP ONE You absolutely need a higher-capacity memory card. The default 32MB stick is great for game saves but pretty worthless as far as other multimedia options go. The 512MB stick should work great for shorter movies (you might be able to squeeze in two), one long movie, or a series of TV episodes—whatever you want. If you want to get serious, go for the 1GB memory stick, which easily lets you store about three full-length movies. Unfortunately, high-volume sticks are quite pricey (even the SanDisk-branded versions, though they're much cheaper than Sony's memory sticks), so you'll have to invest a good chunk of change.

STEP TWO Ripping and encoding movies gets a bit tricky if you're not already familiar with the process, so we'll just give you the basics. First, grab a DVD or video that you want to transfer to your PSP. If you're going with a DVD, then you'll need DVD ripping software that will allow you to extract the movie file. Once it's extracted, you have to use encoding software that will make the movie viewable on the PSP since it supports only a specific video format. There are a few different options available for encoding software. If you're using Mac OS X, then you can use iPSP, which offers a number of different encoding options (for example, there's an option to make the file smaller at the cost of losing image and sound quality). For the PC, there are a few alternatives. You can use Sony's own encoding software, which actually hasn't gone into full release at the time of this writing, or you can use other software that will convert the files into an MP4 format. Check out the links in the sidebar to find out where you can get this software.

STEP THREE Now you have to transfer the converted MP4 movie file over to your PSP. All you have to do is plug your PSP into your computer via a USB (be sure to select the USB connect option on the PSP) and you should be good to go. When you click on the PSP icon on your computer, you'll notice that there's a file directory structure. Unfortunately, putting movies on the PSP isn't as simple as tossing them into a directory called "movie." You have to create a new directory called MP_ROOT, which should be sitting outside the main PSP folder. Once you've done that, you should rename your movies to MV40000 and change the "0000" to number different movies. So, your first movie would be MV40001.MP4, and so on. Then transfer the MP4 file over to the PSP and you should be ready to watch some movies on the go.

PUT PICTURES ON YOUR MEMORY STICK

This is pretty easy to do and there are instructions on how to put pictures on your PSP in the manual itself. However, it's worth pointing out that if you're using iPSP for OS X or if similar software gets released on the PC, your PSP can automatically sync with some picture programs. So, it's easy to just select whatever pictures you want to transfer over and be done with it. Again, you're going to have to buy a large memory stick if

PSP
SELECT
START

you want to be able to look at lots of images along with everything else.

The idea is to not think of pictures in the typical sense, but to think of anything that can be transferred into a JPG or any other compatible format to your PSP. Theoretically, you could scan any reading material (books, comic books, magazines) into a compatible format and have it available to read on the PSP. Unfortunately, right now, it takes a few seconds for the PSP to render an image, so if it's an image that requires a lot of scrolling, you'll notice it's a bit blurry at first. This seems more like an issue with the PSP than the speed of the memory stick, so it may be possible for Sony to remedy the problem with a firmware update in the future.

PUT MUSIC ON YOUR MEMORY STICK

The same things that apply to pictures pretty much apply to music. All you have to do is set your PSP to USB connect mode and transfer either MP3 or ATRAC music files into the music directory folder on the PSP. Again, this whole process will be a whole lot easier if you are using some kind of software that handles the busywork for you, but even if you don't, it still isn't too difficult.

Unfortunately, the PSP isn't a full-featured music player, but it gets the job done. There are a few general settings to adjust bass and treble, depending on the type of song you're listening to, but you can't adjust individual sound levels. As far as playlists go, the PSP does support m3u playlists as well as different directories, so you can still load up specific music and have it ready to go when you're out and about. The audio quality of the PSP is pretty good, but we also highly recommend that you invest in a good pair of earphones to get the most out of it.

USEFUL SOFTWARE

If you're using OS X, then iPSP is the only application you need. It syncs with almost all preexisting Mac applications, such as iTunes and iPhoto, plus it makes encoding movies a snap. Check it out at kaisakura.com. If you're on a PC and looking for software to help convert your movie files into PSP-compatible MPEG-4 files, then look no further than www.nurs.or.jp/~calcium/3gpp/. It's a little difficult to use at the moment, but it should work well until Sony releases its official encoding software.

NOT A LOT OF CHOICES

The memory stick duo and memory stick pro duo, which are compatible with the PSP, come in flavors ranging from 32MB to 1GB. The pro duo is a little bit faster than the duo. While this difference is negligible while playing games, you may notice a slight difference when loading up movies, music, or images. Unfortunately, only Sony and SanDisk offer memory sticks at the moment. The Sony versions are generally much more expensive, but they're a bit easier to find. We advise shopping around on the Internet to find good deals—Froogle.com is a great place to start—but make sure you don't accidentally pick up a regular pro memory stick. It's longer than the duo or pro duo, so it won't fit in the PSP.

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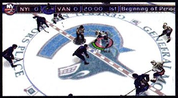
7 SWEETTOOTH
FIRE 1



THE LAUNCH

OH, THE GAMES WE PLAY

No doubt, March 24 will go down as a major day in videogame history. The PSP will be available on store shelves for $249.99 and will come with a 32MB memory stick, headphones with remote, a battery pack, a UMD sampler containing movies and music, a soft case, and a cleaning cloth. The first 1 million units will also come with the film *Spider-Man 2*. While the soft case does an OK job of protecting the screen and the unit from harm, it's probably a good idea to invest in a hard PSP case—just in case you drop your PSP on the ground or put it in a bag that also happens to hold a variety of sharp or abrasive objects.

There will be plenty of games available at launch as well (almost too many), so you should have plenty to keep you busy for a few months. The following games are planned to be in stores on March 24 along with the PSP.

Ape Escape: On the Loose
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails
Darkstalkers Chronicle:
  The Chaos Tower
Dynasty Warriors
FIFA 2005
Gretzky NHL
Lumines
Metal Gear Acid
MLB
MVP Baseball
NBA
NBA Street Showdown
Need for Speed Underground Rivals
NFL Street 2 Unleashed
Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory
Ridge Racer
Smartbomb
Spider-Man 2
Tiger Woods PGA Tour
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  Brotherhood of the Blade
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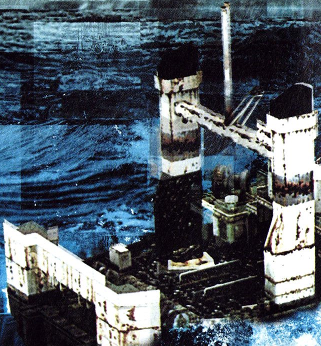

MATURE 17+
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Language

PlayStation 2

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2K SPORTS

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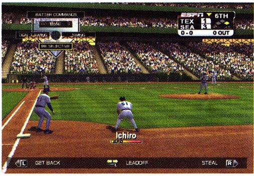
BATTER COMMANDS
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STEAL

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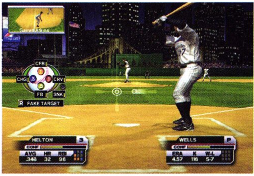
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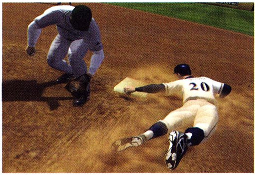

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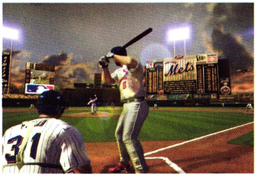

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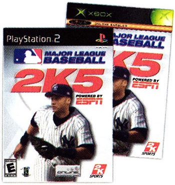
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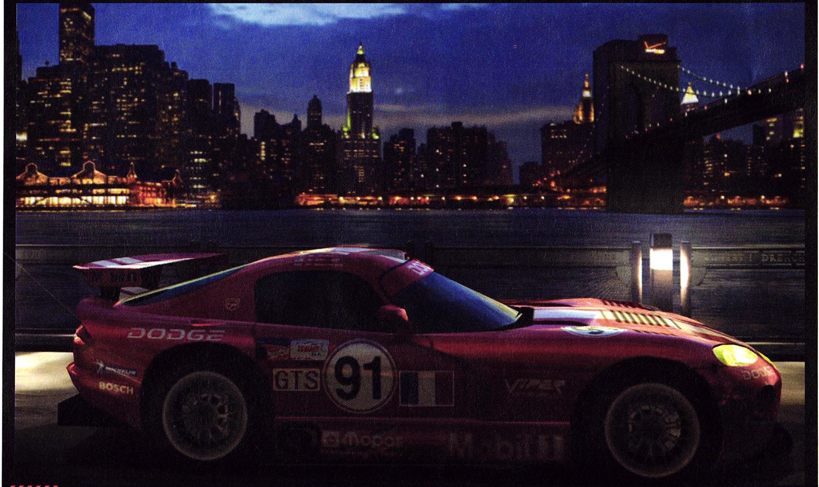


REVIEWS

098›

GT4

IT WAS WORTH THE WAIT

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

[★]

GAME OF THE MONTH

RATING KEY

Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well…at least they're fun to rip apart.

[●●●●●]

INSIDE

102 Finny the Fish & the Seven Waters
102 Kessen III
102 Musashi Samurai Legend
103 Playboy: The Mansion
106 TimeSplitters: Future Perfect
109 FIFA Street
109 World Tour Soccer 2006
110 Major League Baseball 2K5
110 MLB 2006
110 MVP Baseball 2005
112 Project: Snowblind
114 Fight Night Round 2
114 MX vs. ATV Unleashed
114 Rugby 2005
116 Devil May Cry 3

118 DVDs

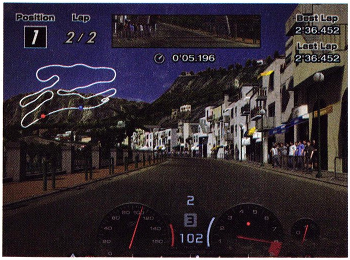
GRAN TURISMO 4

HOW MUCH MORE REAL CAN IT GET?

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

One of the truly defining moments of GT4 comes in the new mission modes, which open up once you've proven yourself sufficiently skilled at driving. Thirty-four specific tasks are presented to you, beginning with 10 very simple tests of overtaking skill, 10 three-lap challenges, four "slipstream battles" that have you testing the very effectively simulated laws of physics on a fast oval, and finally the ultimate test of skill, the "one-lap magic" races. The last, and arguably most difficult, 10 challenges of the game take historical vehicles from single manufacturers and pit them against each other on famous racetracks. The last of these spreads five Mercedes-Benz supercars against each other in the ultimate locale, the Nürburgring Nordschleife in Germany. The lineup sees a 1954 Gullwing 300SL lead the pack against a '98 SLK 230, a '91 190E Evolution II, and an AMG SL65. Oh, and don't forget your car—that snarling silver dream machine, the McLaren SLR. How could any of the other cars possibly pose a threat to your 617-hp super Benz, a vehicle that can erupt from 0 to 60 in 3.7 seconds? The 300SL has a 123-second head start on you, that's how. And you have to get ahead of it within just one lap. The SLR can just about crack the double ton when the hammer's down; the 300SL can barely muster 145 and struggles to hit 60 in less than double digits. With just over two minutes on you, he'll be tough to catch, especially with the other three guys leaving the start line at 30-second intervals and getting in your way en route.

After sitting on the line waiting for what seems like an eternity, you finally get the green light and nail the SLR. As the car makes its peak 575 lb-ft of torque at 3,250 rpm, the back wheels dig into the tarmac and hurtle the car forward with a ferociousness that's just shocking. As you wiggle your way through the Hatzenbach and Hocheichen turns, you get a feel for the car's power and learn the limits of its cornering ability. As you ease your way onto the Quiddelbacher-Hohe straight, your first brief but delectable taste of the car's power is given. Five or six seconds of brutal acceleration see the horizon coming toward you much faster than is strictly comfortable, and before you know it you're making a smooth right-hander that tests the limits of your nerves. Easing off the throttle, you feather the brake and feel the car tug gently to the left as the tires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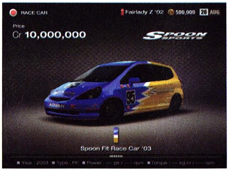
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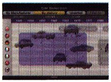
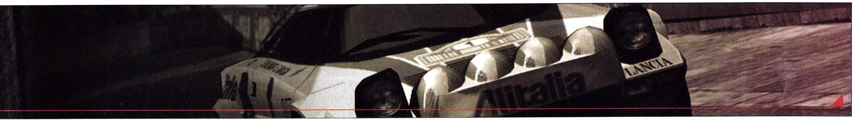


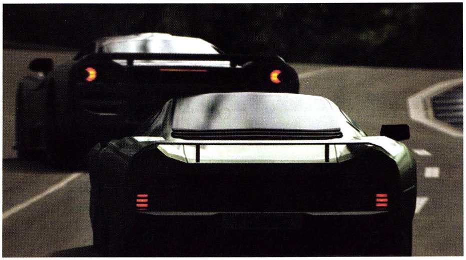


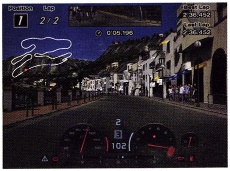
lose some traction and start to squeal. At the apex of the turn, you floor it again, and the full brunt of those 617 ponies surges you forward.

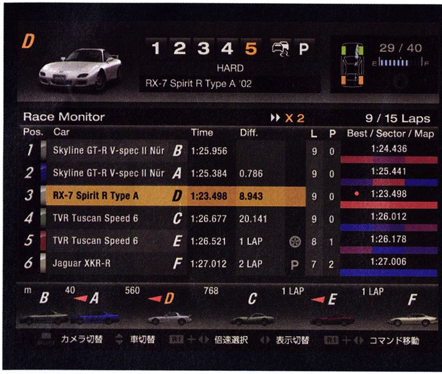
The Nürburgring is 13 miles of fairly treacherous track that most race drivers claim to be the most demanding circuit in the world. These days, any car manufacturer worth its salt tests its new cars there, and real brutes like the SLR are capable of getting around the track in around eight minutes flat, which means keeping an average speed of about 95 mph, even though there are 73 bends to negotiate. My first try while chasing the 300SL was a fairly dismal 12 minutes, and according to the game clock I'd only narrowed the distance between the SL and the SLR by 40 seconds or so. That said, the last minute provided the kind of thrill you get from a game like *Burnout 3*, only it was dished up in a much more believable way.

As you round the Galgenkopf bend on the eastern side of the track, you find yourself hurtling toward the Dottinger-Hohe straight, which is the longest uninterrupted strip of the entire circuit. You come out of the bend pretty slowly. You can probably come out faster than I did, but taking a right-hander that tight at anything more than 50 or 60 takes a particular brand of lunatic, especially when driving a $452,000 ride. As you straighten out, you realize where you are and know you can really see what this thing can do. This is a car that can do 90 in second, remember, so flooring the thing evokes a verbal response that's sort of...holyf***ings***thisissof***ingquick. I defy you to try it and not make some kind of exclamation out loud. In a straight line the SLR feels as though it has warp engines, and the feeling of real power is unlike anything I've seen in a racing game before. *Burnout 3* and *Need for Speed* do a good job of scaring you with speed, but GT4 is the only car sim that's done a convincing job of putting you behind a 5.4 liter V8.

Any of you who have been eagerly consuming every scrap of information about this game for the past two or three years would be forgiven for getting a little tired of all the talk of hyperrealistic physics engines and the attention to minute details that Yamauchi and his team have been affording this game. After that first lap around the Nürburgring in the SLR, I knew what the big deal was. With a joypad it felt pretty damn







D

1 2 3 4 5 P

HARD

RX-7 Spirit R Type A '02

29 / 40

Race Monitor ▸▸ X 2 9 / 15 Laps

Pos.	Car		Time	Diff.		L	P	Best / Sector / Map
1	Skyline GT-R V-spec II Nür	B	1:25.956			9	0	1:24.436
2	Skyline GT-R V-spec II Nür	A	1:25.384	0.786		9	0	1:25.441
3	RX-7 Spirit R Type A	D	1:23.498	8.943		9	0	● 1:23.498
4	TVR Tuscan Speed 6	C	1:26.677	20.141		9	0	1:26.012
5	TVR Tuscan Speed 6	E	1:26.521	1 LAP	⚙	8	1	1:26.178
6	Jaguar XKR-R	F	1:27.012	2 LAP	P	7	2	1:27.006

m B 40 A 560 D 768 C 1 LAP E 1 LAP F

IS B-SPEC BORING?

There have been lots of previews of GT4 since E3 last May, and there's been lots of talk of Yamauchi's weird B-spec mode. If this mode left you scratching your head a bit, as it did me, I'm here to finally explain what the big deal is. For those of you whose initial reaction to the concept was "That sounds incredibly boring," you might be surprised to know that, taken the right way, it's actually quite satisfying. When Yamauchi described the mode to us a few months ago, he likened it to watching a race on TV, stating, "Sometimes you just want to drink coffee and watch." If you're an F1 fan, few things could have been more boring than last year's season, so fiddling with a few controls and obsessing over split times while watching a videogame play itself is actually significantly more interesting than what you may be saving on your TiVo. If you really get into the thing, you can actually spend a fairly relaxing hour keeping an eye on tire wear and fuel levels while putting your feet up and seeing what happens. The key to enjoying this is to understand the spirit with which it was produced. It's not a hardcore management sim; it's just a fancy replay with some funky AI that you can tweak.

So to answer that question in the headline...no, not really. To make things more fun, you can play races in B-spec mode that you're not allowed to enter if you don't have the appropriate license yet, so it doubles as a neat little preview feature, too.

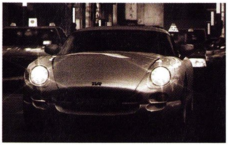
TURISMO
MAGNETI MARELLI
GRAN TURISMO

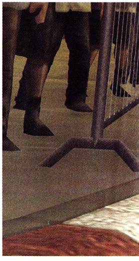
realistic, but with a Logitech wheel and pedal set, it was almost disturbingly so.

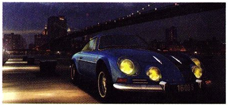
There's a lot to say about GT4, most of which you're probably aware of already. Yes, it has the photo mode, which is gloriously distracting and incredibly easy to use. Yes, it has the B-spec mode that you don't really have to play (see sidebar), and yes, it has a ridiculous number of cars in it, many of which you won't care about. Yes, it's gorgeous to look at, and it has a great soundtrack, but the real honest-to-God beauty of this thing is in the moments of intense satisfaction that it provides.

Early in your career you'll be working through the beginner races in some kind of used heap that you've picked up for the pittance you begin the game with. For me it was a midnight-blue 1989 Skyline that I bought for a few grand. After winning some cash in the loser dome races, I was getting to a point where the competition was just too hard. The Skyline was killing in the jalopy races, but as soon as I took it to a series with a more significant purse, I was getting walked all over by RX-8s and M coupes. Winning series bags you cars, so after winning a VW Lupo for crushing a bunch of '80s rust heaps, I sold it and used the winnings to beef up the Skyline with a turbo, an expensive air filter, the best exhaust system money could buy, and some weight-reducing goodies. Prior to these mods I'd been racing in Seattle and getting my ass handed to me by a Chrysler Crossfire (of all things) that wouldn't let me finish better than fourth, no matter how well I drove. After the mods I crushed the obnoxious little poseur, and his buddy in an S2000, and their pal in the flame-red RX-8. The feeling of satisfaction was inspiring and pushed me to channel my newfound arrogance into the harder license tests.

The license tests are back. As with GT3, there are five different licenses to play through, and yes, the B-license stuff is as dull as ever. Each license presents 16 challenges, and at the beginning these are as tough as "drive in a straight line," which is to say, not. Don't be disheartened though, it's all worth it in the end. To play the bulk of the game you'll need to beat four of the five license tests and land yourself an International A license, and in gameplay terms, it's going to take a good four or five hours of time just to get there. The ultimate test of skill, of course, is







Castrol
Mercedes-Benz
REMY
elf
POLYPHONY DIGITAL
MAGNETI MARELLI
Castrol
Clio RENAULT sport v6

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?

Not much, and the stuff that's annoying shouldn't be. You can't, for example, access the sound settings in-game. So if you're sick of Van Halen while hurtling around Seattle, there's nothing you can do about it until you're done. You can make playlists, which is a nice touch, but sometimes I just want to turn the damn music off and listen to a rip-snorting V10 try to tear its way out of my engine bay.

the super license, and you'll need this if you want to open up the really crazy stuff in the game, like F1 races. Competent racing gamers will need at least a few hours to crack the super license. Although not especially crazy in terms of its tasks, the real challenge comes in how particular you need to be on the very lengthy challenges. You'll start by racing a 1966 Alfa Romeo through the narrow streets of Italy, you'll tackle an ice rally with a very strict time limit in a tricked-out Hyundai, and ultimately face the final test, which is a lap of the Nürburgring in a Mercedes 190E Evolution II. Get sloppy on just one turn in any of the challenges, and you'll find yourself burning an hour or more on a single test because of restarts.

After sinking nearly 20 hours into GT4, I'm still nowhere near seeing everything it has to offer. I have an impressive garage packed with some glorious examples of automotive history, but I still don't have everything I want. I have my eye on an Aston Martin DB9, and I really want the Cadillac Cien concept, because I've always wanted a car that looks like a stealth bomber. I will no doubt be playing this thing for months—at the very least—and every time I shave a few seconds off my time at Nürburgring, I'll feel an even greater sense of satisfaction that will ultimately make my drive to work in the morning seem even more boring than before. « John Davison

SUMMARY If you had your doubts, worry not. GT4 is the best driving sim ever, bar none.

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Polyphony Digital **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●●]

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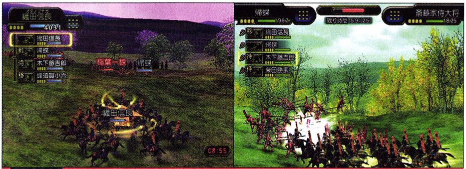


KESSEN III

AN ARMY OF ONE

I'm guessing the average carjacking, quarterback-tackling PS2 player doesn't have much interest in Japanese history, which drives *Kessen III*'s story, or the action/strategy hybrid that plays out in its levels. But why conjecture? I've brought in two gamers to talk it over, one a crabby, overopinionated hardcore guy, the other a more socially adjusted, Joe PlayStation casual player:

HARDCORE [Flipping through menus] How should we deploy? Our troops are on horseback, so maybe someone with foot soldiers.

CASUAL Is this the game? I hate this stuff, menus in menus in menus.

H Oh look, here's an autodeploy option for whiny babies like you. You play.

C Whoa! You control the whole army at once. Check this out. [Charges up to a unit of enemy troops and whacks them with spear hits] There's like 500 guys on the screen. Awesome!

H Don't just mindlessly charge in. Here, let me try. [After wiping out the enemy units] The so-called strategy element severely lacks. And terrain doesn't make enough of a difference.

C But the fighting rules. It feels huge.

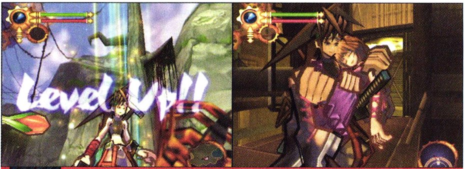
H I don't know. It's hard to tell who's who when more than a couple of units join the fray. The manual camera constantly begs for your attention, never where you want it to be. Probably great fun for *Dynasty Warriors* fans.

C If this was gangs of roller-skating '70s pimps knifing each other on the streets of New York instead of these longwinded kung fu dudes, it would completely rule. « *Robert Ashley*

VERDICT Nicely combines action and strategy elements, but both could use a little more depth.

Pub. Koei **Dev.** Koei **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●○○]



MUSASHI SAMURAI LEGEND

A SAMURAI FOR BABIES

At first, Musashi's (the titular blue-haired samurai kid) quest to rescue a bevy of maidens and retrieve five elemental swords seems like another run, jump, and hit-things affair, but it goes a bit deeper than that. The two main additions—the "duplicating" of enemy attacks and the carrying mechanic—add a fair amount of intrigue to what would otherwise be a mediocre action-RPG. Musashi can "focus" on an enemy and, with proper timing, learn a new technique based off said enemy's attack. Besides learning new attacks, Musashi also physically lugs people around; the very maidens he rescues become both cargo and weapon as Musashi heaves them to and fro and can actually club enemies with them. As he picks up damsels and learns enemy moves, he also does a fair bit of shopping and talking inside a giant skywhale, squeezes in some rescues that don't require carrying the rescuee, and participates in arena combat for some trading cards.

All this makes for a generally amicable adventure that's hindered by crap cinematography and a painful level grind. *Musashi* exhibits a flaw that seems to be literally transferred over from *Kingdom Hearts*: a nigh-useless camera.

Despite *Musashi's* quirky look and interesting mechanics, the elementary mistakes made with the camera and the poor pacing ultimately make the game feel more like its 1998 predecessor than a modern sequel. « *Thierry Nguyen*

BRAVE MUSASHI! Decent action, nifty move-learning and carrying mechanics

COWARDLY MUSASHI Annoying camera, level grind, and a tendency to backtrack a lot

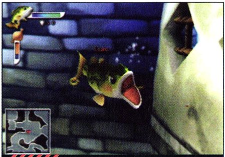
Pub. Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●○○]

Tetsuya Nomura, designer for the *Final Fantasy* and *Kingdom Hearts* franchises, contributed character designs to this new *Musashi*. Which is why everyone in the game has a crazy haircut and brandishes an overabundance of belt buckles.

KAPPA TRIVIA

Finny's mentor is based on the kappa, a mythical Japanese creature that eats small children. The best way to kill a kappa is to spill the water in its head, usually by bowing to it; they are so polite they must bow back.



FINNY THE FISH & THE SEVEN WATERS

TOO SMALL, THROW IT BACK

It's not easy being a fish. First off, I like sushi as much as the next guy, but I don't think I could eat it all day—not to mention the possibility of one day becoming it. So it's clear that Finny the Fish's life was hard enough before he became the Chosen One charged with saving the Seven Waters from an unknown predator. The concept of an action-adventure game set entirely under the sea is unique, but *Finny the Fish & the Seven Waters* has a shelf life shorter than an unrefrigerated albacore's.

For the most part, Finny controls well. Hold the X button to make him swim; tap it rapidly to go faster. He can also jump out of the water, flopping over gates or up shallow waterfalls. The Circle button makes him attack with his tail fin, and the Square button is used to chow down on prey—over 100 different realistic aquatic denizens (some of whom will eat Finny unless he powers up). Finny must constantly eat to keep his stomach full; if it becomes empty, he starts losing energy.

Constantly having to eat can be annoying and distracting when you're just trying to solve the game's puzzles and complete the level. Even worse for poor Finny is that some food isn't food at all—some items are fishing lures, and if you swallow one, you'll have to fight to get free. If Finny can break the fishing line with a well-placed tail snap, then he'll get the lure for his collection. If not, he'll get caught and released (but he'll lose energy).

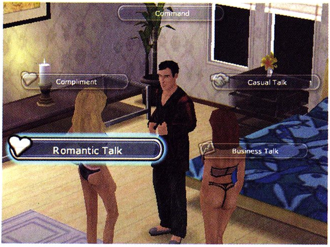
However, *Finny* goes right off the deep end with its length—the entire game can be completed in one six-hour sitting. The puzzles aren't exactly head-scratchers, and the levels, though occasionally difficult to navigate, are shockingly brief. Not counting cinematic cut-scenes, restarts, or pausing, my in-game clock read 2:30 upon completion of the bizarre non sequitur of a final boss fight. *Finny*'s not a bad rental, but it's so shallow you'll be left flopping around, gasping for air. « *Chris Kohler*

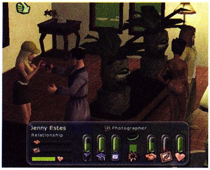
SPLASH A unique premise and inventive gameplay

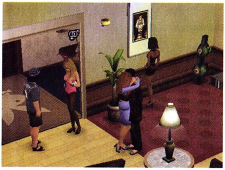
ALL WET Zero challenge, extremely short

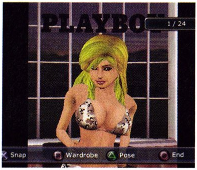
Pub. Natsume **Dev.** Sony CE **ESRB** E **MSRP** $29.99

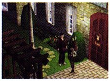
RATING [●●○○○]











PLAYBOY: THE MANSION

WATCH IT WIGGLE...'CAUSE THERE'S NOT MUCH ELSE TO DO

In a recent interview with *OPM*, Brenda Brathwaite, a senior designer on *Playboy: The Mansion*, commented, "If you're going to animate breasts, animate them properly. The breasts in the original *Dark Alliance* drove me nuts." The good news: Brenda and her team did indeed succeed in the quest for jiggly mammaries. The bad news: They were so preoccupied with breast movement that they forgot to make a game to go with it.

As Hugh Hefner, you're charged with developing the *Playboy* publishing empire. For each issue you publish, you need to track down articles, interviews, essays, and, of course, the eye candy of pictorials, centerfolds, and the cover. All the while, you're also accomplishing other goals, which usually tie back into the magazine (get a famous movie star to pose on the cover, help a guy get out of jail so he can help you connect with people to use in the magazine, etc.).

The problem is that 90 percent of these goals are accomplished through conversations with other people. Conversations always follow the exact same trees, and it's always possible to schmooze up people regardless of their mood. There's no challenge, and there's no variety. It's less like playing a game than it is like working on a factory line, repeating an identical process over and over.

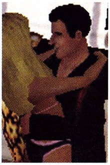
The game is also very poorly constructed. It's incredibly ugly (not a good selling point for a game about hot chicks), and even very basic maneuvering mechanics malfunction regularly. I got trapped at the bottom of a stairway for five minutes, unable to either climb the stairs or leave the alcove. If you hang around the borders of an area of the mansion, you'll often accidentally end up moving to another part of the building. Moving things in design/build mode is awkward—you can't place objects in certain places in a room for inexplicable reasons. Also, objects often interfere with photo shoots—my camera will penetrate walls, but if there's a mirror hanging on the wall that's ostensibly behind me, it will block my shot.

And that's the real crime of this game: I'm playing as the ultimate playboy of the universe, and I have time to notice annoying details because I am *so bored*. Some Playboy lifestyle... « *Dana Jongewaard*

REAL Magazine-building concept is an interesting one for a game...
SILICONE ...too bad they forgot the game

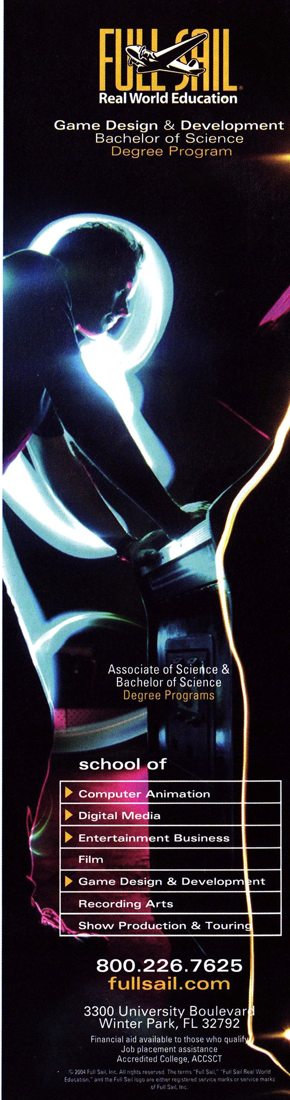
Pub. Arush Ent. **Dev.** Cyberlore **ESRB** M **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●○○○



THE HEF STRESS TEST

In a nod to Hef's virility, sex is the only action that doesn't come with an automatic end—you have to stop it manually. So how long will Hef continue to get it on if you don't interrupt? Forever, apparently—the only thing that gets him down is when you run the company into bankruptcy because you were too busy with the ladies to keep making money.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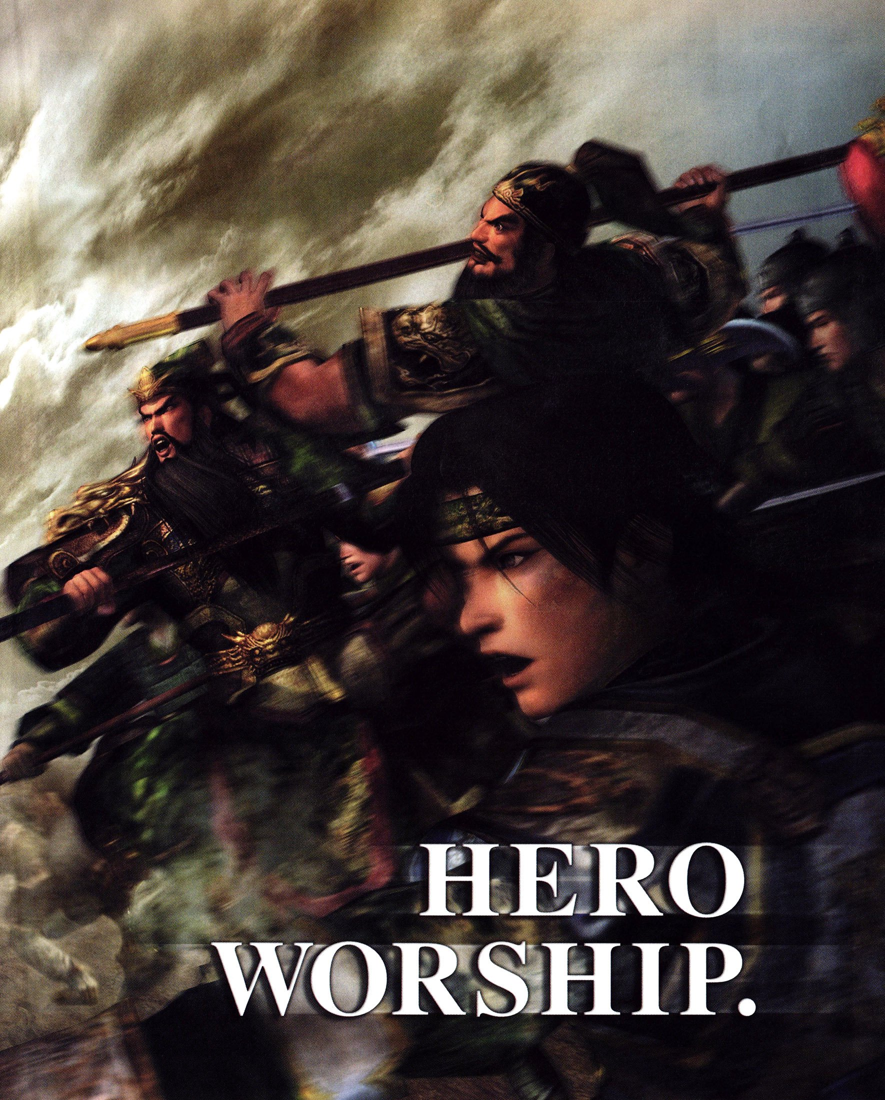
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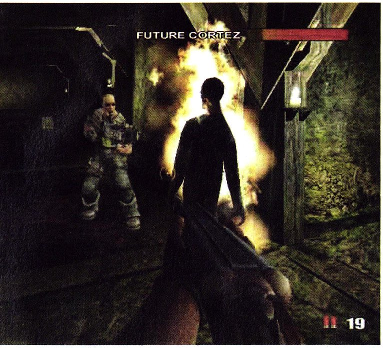
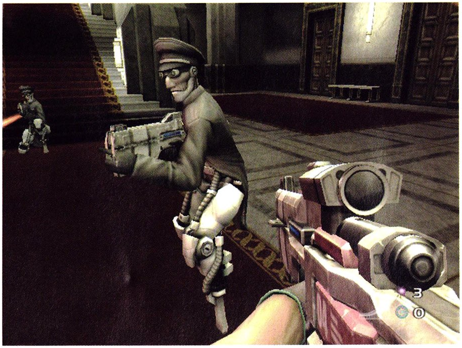
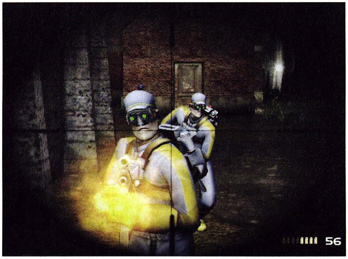
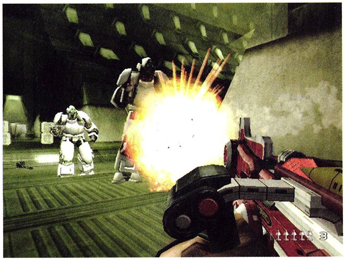








TIMESPLITTERS:

HELP YOURSELF TO SOME PERFECTLY ENTERTAINING FPS FUN

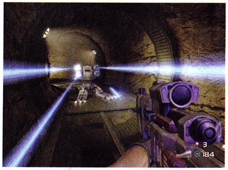
For some reason completely unfathomable to me, the *TimeSplitters* series always seems to get a bad rap from anyone who hasn't actually played it. It's as though the jaded FPS elitists take one look at the somewhat cartoony graphics and instantly turn their noses up, sniffing and muttering about how it can't possibly be a "serious" first-person shooter.

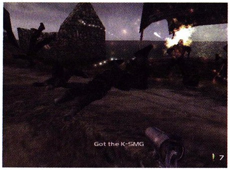
Well, I've got a message for you, fellas: I don't care if it's "serious." *TimeSplitters* has never failed to be a complete blast to play, and *Future Perfect* upholds that tradition by improving upon the series' lofty standards in nearly every way.

The most fundamental change is the introduction of an honest-to-goodness story. Yes, instead of an artificially strung-together sequence of generally unconnected missions, there is now a common thread that runs through the entire game. Moreover, you actually play as just one character throughout—a fact that will shock fans of the previous games.

This is a welcome change, addressing what was the series' biggest weakness. Now, don't get me wrong—this isn't Oscar-caliber scriptwriting or anything. The basic plot is, in fact, fairly simple. But it provides motivation for your actions as time-jumper Cortez, and more importantly, provides a justification for some hysterical cinematics. It's not so much the writing that makes these cut-scenes so funny as it is the comic timing—not to mention recurring gags like Cortez's "Time to split!" catchphrase (which other characters in the game correctly recognize as almost unspeakably cheesy).

The real innovation, though, is a devious exploitation of the time-travel theme, in which Cortez repeatedly travels back just a few moments in time to help himself get through some tough spots. This is handled very skillfully in the game; you'll do things like drive a tank and then go back in time to man the guns on the same tank, or guard your own back as you hack a computer via a simple tile-puzzle interface. Hearing this, you might think there's a chance these segments could feel tedious and forced, as though the designers attempted to draw out the playtime by forcing you to replay segments, but it's not that way at all. Each instance is comfort-





MULTIPLAYER CAVEAT

I wish that I could enthusiastically endorse *Future Perfect*'s online play. Unfortunately, my experience with the review code was inconclusive. While the game ran beautifully while I played against other Ziffers here in the office, a game set up by EA was one of the worst-performing online games I've experienced. Players were popping in and out of view, "ghost" players were running into walls all over the maps, and players were getting booted with disturbing frequency.

Now, EA assures me that this was a result of an unusually poor shared connection—the only connection that was not protected by EA's internal firewall (which prevented us from joining any games hosted on its network). On top of this, online optimization tends to be one of the final polishing steps before sending a game off to be pressed. But there's really no way to tell at this point whether the game will have similar problems once it's released at retail. As a result, I am not factoring this experience into the score. The game definitely *can* run great online, and the offline is fantastic no matter what. But if shoddy online play is a deal-breaker for you, you may want to hold off on a purchase. Check back in next month's Replay for an update.

FUTURE PERFECT

ably brief, so you're in and out before you have a chance to get bored with it; but more importantly, in the vast majority of circumstances you're performing different tasks each time. So it's not a cruel trick, but a really entertaining gimmick. It works.

As for the basic gameplay, well, that remains virtually unchanged—which is a very good thing, if you ask me. The game is still blazingly fast, with a sizable selection of interesting weapons for each time period, some of the sharpest graphics you'll see on any system, and plenty of completely unrealistic settings to play around in. The addition of a limited selection of vehicles adds a little variety, but the only major alteration here is that the designers finally got rid of the aiming quirk that caused your gun to "lead" before the screen moved, a change that is most noticeable—and most welcome—when sniping. (Incidentally, you can revert to the old style of aiming in the Options screen, if you're a glutton for punishment.)

I have no problem with the fundamental gameplay remaining unchanged. As I see it, this allowed the designers to concentrate on coming up with interesting levels, lots more minigame-style challenges (most memorable: monkey curling), and unusual multiplayer modes for splitscreen and online play. (Check out the sidebars for more specifics about online.) There's only one area in which I was really hoping for a bigger change: mapmaker.

Now, if you've messed around with mapmaker in the past, you know that you can do a lot with it. In fact, a dedicated person would be able to create an entire story level if he really wanted to sit down and hack it out. (Incidentally, this depth is going to make things really interesting once the game comes out and everyone starts trading maps online; remember to make judicious use of the map rating option so the rest of us will know what to look for and what to stay away from!) I just wish there were some way to customize the look of the levels a bit more. I remember some of the map pieces from the first game—like that awesome cathedral—and it makes me wish it were possible to craft more organic creations. Oh well,

TimeSplitters
195

ONLINE ACTION

Future Perfect **has** an extensive collection of interesting game types for multiplayer fun. You've got your standard deathmatch (team and every-man-for-himself flavors), capture the bag (read: flag), and zones (think *Star Wars Battlefront*), but there are also a bunch of completely new modes. Check 'em out.

Shrink: Your size is related to your ranking in the game. The player in first place is normal sized; the player in last is very, very tiny (and thus harder to hit).

Gladiator: Only the "gladiator" can score, and you have to kill the gladiator to become the gladiator.

Vampire: Your health depletes over time; killing other players restores it.

Thief: You aren't awarded points instantly for a kill; instead, the newly deceased drops a coin that other players can pick up if you don't get there quickly enough.

Virus: One player is on fire, and he has to touch other players to set them on fire, too. The winner is the last player left uncharred.

Bagtag: The player who manages to hang on to the bag for the longest total time is the winner.

Assault: One team defends a base while the other team attacks; the attacking team must fulfill specific objectives to win.

Elimination: Each player gets a predetermined number of lives—last man standing wins.

In addition to all this, while you're online (waiting for a friend to show up, for example), you can participate in single-player challenges, and the results are posted on leaderboards so you can compare your performance to others around the world. It's a neat little extra that carries over into the single-player game.

And finally, while online you can access a repository of user-created maps. You can download maps, rate maps you've played, recommend a map to anyone on your friends list, send feedback to the creator of the map, or find more maps by the same author—and, of course, put your own maps up as well. But don't think you'll need to go through this process anytime you want to play on a friend's map—if you want to join a game that you don't have the map for, the game will download it automatically as you join the lobby.

All in all, the online options are really extensive and well put together.

maybe on PS3.... At least the developers did add some more decorative details so that I can finally fashion a scale model of the funeral home where I grew up.

Yes, I'm aware this is a really minor complaint. No, I don't have anything more major to gripe about. Look: In one of our multiplayer matches, *EGM*'s Greg Ford commented that "*Future Perfect* is to shooters what *Burnout 3* is to racing games." That's exactly right, and I couldn't have expressed it any better. *Future Perfect* is the kind of game that places pure entertainment above stodgy realism and loads up the experience with tons of extras, minigames, and well-paced rewards. The result is a game that's not necessarily impossible to put down (because it's divided into easily digestible segments, you see)—but is impossible to *stop picking up*. Just one more challenge! Just one more arcade level! Just one more online match!

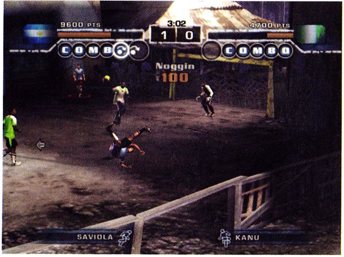
So say what you will about *TimeSplitters* being too arcadey or too cartoony or not serious enough—I'll just be over here having a hell of a time. Last I checked, that's what games were for. « *Joe Rybicki*

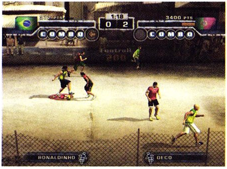
BACK TO THE FUTURE Lightning-fast gameplay, innovative time-travel gimmick, loads of extras make for some serious replay value

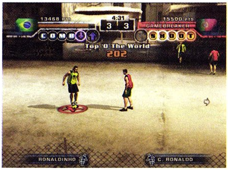
BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD Online play may be very hit-or-miss, story mode is a bit short, mapmaker could still use some detail

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Free Radical **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●●]







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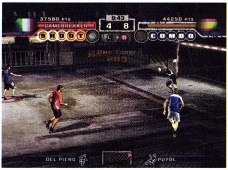


FIFA STREET

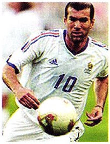
MORE LIKE RUSHED OUT THE DOOR STREET

I keep telling myself, "This is just the starting point. This is just the starting point. This is just the starting point." But even if this game is the first of many, *FIFA Street*'s debut is still a rushed and bungled bust. As much as I want to cut it some slack, I can't—$50 is a lot of coin for a virtually unfinished title.

Streetifying the sports genre isn't easy business—developers have no model to work from like they do with simulation sports. That's why it's impressive that *NBA Street* and *NFL Street* have nailed both the theme and the gameplay. But while *FIFA Street* has the former under wraps, the latter—the troubled gameplay—has a long way to go.

The heel flips, crossovers, and other nifty maneuvers make this one worth a try, but the moves are a mild selling point, and there really aren't enough of them. The soccer basics come off as a secondary consideration. Passing the ball is awkward. Players come to an unnatural stop to receive the ball, betraying Newton's rule of inertia. This stop-and-start movement is clumsy and kills the game's flow. Shooting is dreadful. The animations take a drearily long time to load up, meaning your player won't snap off a quick shot—even if he's in the goalmouth and merely needs to tap the ball to bury it. And players have to fully control the ball before firing off a shot or a pass—there's no way to snap off a one-timer to expose a downed keeper.

On the upside, the gamebreakers work well; the environments truly capture their international settings, from scenic Marseille to a dusty square in Rio de Janeiro to West 4th in NYC; and the soundtrack is my favorite in games (outside the *GTA* universe). But an oversimplified career mode, lack of game modes, shoddy dribbling physics (the ball seems magnetically tied to a dribbler's feet), and complete lack of responsiveness mean you should wait for the sequel to get your kicks. « *Todd Zuniga*



The Marseille playground that's featured in *FIFA Street* is where French national Zinedine Zidane played as a youth. Unfortunately, Zidane (considered one of the best players ever to walk on the field) isn't in the game—he retired from international play last December.

PROS Spot-on environments, fantastic soundtrack, nice tricks
CONS Unresponsive controls, shooting and passing are rough, feels rushed

Pub. EA Sports Big **Dev.** EA Canada **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING ●●◐○○

WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2006

THIS ONE GETS THE BOOT

Lost somewhere between *Winning Eleven 8*'s spectacular gameplay and *FIFA 2005*'s visual flair, you'll find *World Tour Soccer 2006*, a soccer game without a definitive identity. The lone progressive feature is all about identity—not the game's own (sadly), but yours. The EyeToy camera puts your unflattering visage onto a player and into the game. While this doesn't sound groundbreaking, it is: Instead of a snapshot that gets grossly slapped onto a player model (*THUG*, anyone?), this is the real deal. The process takes a few minutes, but you'll look as good as the game's brightest stars (in part because Henry and Rooney and Figo don't look all that bright).

While there's some level of cool with the EyeToy, there's a higher level of "who cares?" Putting your face into a game is old news, and it doesn't make up for the jerky, uneventful gameplay that'll make you wish you'd bought *Winning Eleven 8*. Players seem to move in tandem with oddly similar jogs, and very little in the game drives you to the different season or career modes. That's if you make it through the challenging, miniscule typeface on the menus—not an easy task.

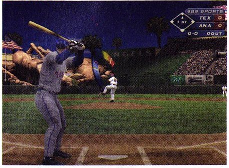
WTS makes very little attempt to be special or to stand out from its competitors, and the result, instead of a solid, grounded operation, is a game that comes off as ordinary. Scoring opportunities are too easy and mean too little, and the "wow" moments—scoring a goal, beating a defender—serve up more yawns than adrenaline. « *Todd Zuniga*

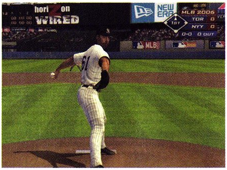
PROS EyeToy feature is tremendous, loads of teams, including Premiership clubs
CONS Milquetoast graphics, yawning gameplay, jerky camera, horrific replays
VERDICT Kick this one to the curb

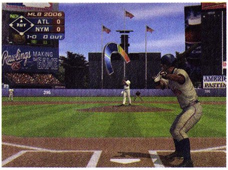
Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Sony CEA **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING ●●○○○

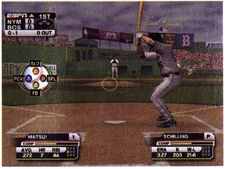
MLB 2006

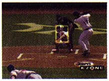


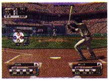


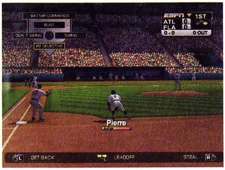


MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K5









PLAY IT ONLINE

While the true test of each game's online play will take place when the games' servers are full after launch, rest assured that each game has full online support.

THE STARTING LINEUP

MVP BASEBALL 2005, MLB 2006,

A ROUNDUP OF THE PS2'S BASEBALL-SIM TRIO

Last year, gamers were overwhelmed by baseball sims, with four options available on the PS2. This year, that number drops to three, as Acclaim's *All-Star Baseball* series has been sent packing to the great ballpark in the sky along with its publisher. That leaves EA Sports' *MVP Baseball 2005*, Take-Two's *Major League Baseball 2K5*, and Sony's *MLB 2006* to slug it out for baseball-sim supremacy. Lucky for us, all three are serious contenders.

PITCHING

Whereas *MVP* cleaned up in this category last year thanks to its quick and simple pitch meter, things are much tighter this year. *MLB* goes the flattery route by utilizing a meter similar to *MVP*'s, although it feels more cumbersome and has an added step—you pick your pitch and then chuck the ball; *MVP*'s meter incorporates this into one step.

2K5 opts to go in a different direction, offering an effective system called KZone, in which you pick a pitch and location and then try to stop two markers on your target—one that slides across a horizontal line and another that travels up or down a vertical line. And while KZone is involved and rewarding, *MVP*'s meter still wins out.

WINNER *MVP Baseball 2005*

HITTING

Hitting isn't a problem in any of these games, although there are some key differences. *MLB* has finally implemented check swings, as well as drag bunts and a pitch-guessing system. Choose the right pitch type, and a target lets you know where it's going (guess fastball on 3-0 counts and let it fly if you're right). Hitting in *2K5* is smooth, helped by a great crack of the bat and the chance for the batter to gain a boost by guessing the pitch location.

MVP wins this category by the slimmest of margins, though, with an intuitive swing system and a new feature called the hitter's eye, which flashes the color of a corresponding pitch type as it leaves the pitcher's hand.

WINNER *MVP Baseball 2005*

FIELDING

Like it did last year, *2K5* features great fielding thanks to its speed boosts and slick handling system. It may be a little too slick, though—infielders and even the pitcher tend to get to more balls than you'd think possible. It's still good, but you may have to tweak things to your liking with gameplay sliders.

MLB and *MVP* both do a solid job here, with preloaded throws, responsive controls, and generally intelligent decisions by the AI.

WINNER *MVP Baseball 2005/MLB 2006*

BASERUNNING

Baserunning is often a tough area for many baseball games, but this trio handles it pretty well. *2K5*'s is certainly passable, but it proves to be a little too complex for the speed at which the action happens, and you'll likely lose many a baserunner because of it. This is somewhat redeemed by two clever additions: 1) You can give your baserunner a boost by banging on his corresponding button, and 2) there's a cool baserunner mode in which you can control a runner and take leads and steal while the computer controls the batter.

MLB has a simple and intuitive system, with its only fault being its lack of controllable slides. *MVP* comes in a close second here with a system similar to *MLB*'s that isn't quite as responsive.

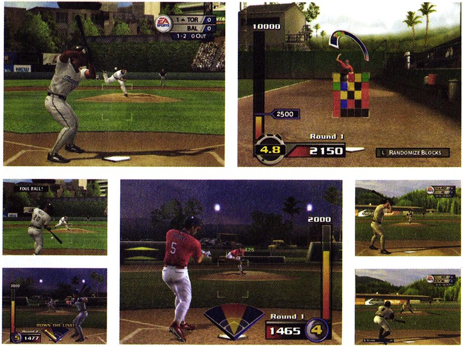
WINNER *MLB 2006*

GRAPHICS/PRESENTATION

While *MLB* has tons of great animations and smooth graphics, its overall lackluster presentation just can't compare to the slick offerings provided by the other two players. *MVP* is solid on both counts, but in this category, *2K5* easily takes the cake. Its ESPN broadcast implementation is better than ever—commentators Jon Miller and Joe Morgan are great, killing dead time by answering fan-mail questions, and all the replays are of high quality.

WINNER *Major League Baseball 2K5*

MVP BASEBALL 2005



YOU'D BETTER STEAL THIS, TAKE-TWO...

With Take-Two recently securing rights from the MLB Players Association for exclusive use of all players' likenesses, the PS2 baseball landscape could change greatly next year. If there indeed is only one game (although first-party developers, like Sony, can still release games, so *MLB* will likely be back), the following are the features we'd like to see:

- The hitting, pitching, and fielding systems from *MVP*
- *MLB*'s baserunning, or better yet, the supersimple yet effective setup from cult favorite *R.B.I. Baseball* on the NES
- *2K5*'s sublime presentation (though that may prove tricky without the ESPN license)
- *MLB*'s create-a-player and career mode
- The *All-Star Baseball* series' what-if scenarios that let you re-create situations from the previous season (who knows, maybe Houston could have made it to its first World Series ever last year with a few lucky bounces)
- *MVP*'s minigames...as well as a few new ones that make fielding fun
- The ability to jack bullpen carts and beat up mascots...just because

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K5

FRANCHISE/OTHER MODES

All three games offer some decent unique modes, and they all feature the now-requisite minor league presence as well (*MVP* even adds some single-A teams). In addition to an insanely deep franchise mode that lets you tweak almost every conceivable detail, *MLB* has an interesting career mode that lets you create a player (you can use the EyeToy to put in your own mug) to take through spring training and hopefully a successful major league career. *2K5* complements its hefty franchise mode with a GM mode that gives you goals and requires you to make a profit and control spending. *MVP* has the most far-reaching modes, though, with its dynasty mode (basically a supercharged franchise mode, which, oddly, still forces you to go through full 162-game schedules) and the new owner mode, which lets you build a stadium and then gives you 30 years to become a success. Unfortunately, the latter is hampered by a slow start, as you're almost immediately in the red—still, it's rewarding for patient gamers.

WINNER Draw

GIMMICKS

Both *MVP* and *2K5* have a plethora of extras that will keep you playing, while *MLB* is a little more vanilla in this area—it does have some unlockable players and stadiums and a cool fast-forward feature that lets you skip past innings, though. *2K5*'s slam mode lets you capitalize on an opposing pitcher's mistake by zooming in on his hand and slowing things down, at which point you can charge up your swing and then let it fly. It also has plenty of cheats, uniforms, teams, and games—such as air hockey and darts—that you can unlock in your skybox with points you earn playing the game, but most of the stuff has been done before.

MVP loads up on the unlockables and even has a grainy, old-timey "Cooperstown effect" when you play in classic stadiums. Most substantial are its hitting and pitching minigames, which prove to be quite addictive since they help you hone skills and earn points to unlock the goods.

WINNER *MVP Baseball 2005*

OVERALL

This is a solid year for baseball sims—no title has any glaring weaknesses. And though you really can't go wrong with any of them, *MVP* once again offers the best all-around package. « *Greg Ford*

MLB 2006

DOUBLE Builds on a good engine from last year to produce a solid sim with few gameplay flaws, but it lacks the gimmicks, presentation, and general fireworks the other games have to bring it to the next level.

Pub. SCEA **Dev.** 989 Sports **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●●◐○]

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K5

TRIPLE A fantastic presentation and good extras anchor a highly enjoyable game—only its baserunning and fielding are a step behind its competitors.

Pub. Take-Two Interactive **Dev.** 2K Games **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

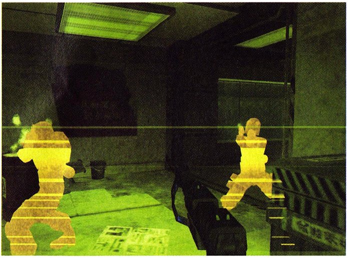
RATING [●●●◐○]

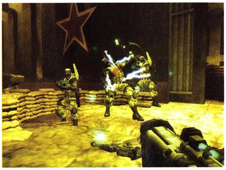
MVP BASEBALL 2005

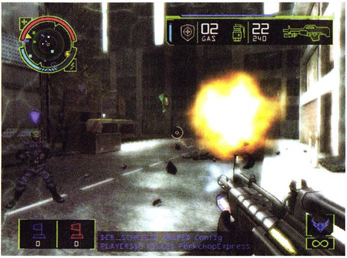
HOMER All-around solid play, responsive controls, and great bonus features separate this game from the pack, with only a few flaws keeping it from being a perfect hardball sim.

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Canada **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●◐]







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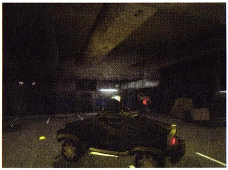


ONLINE NIRVANA

***Project: Snowblind*'s** online features read like an FPS forum wish list. Game modes include deathmatch, team deathmatch, assault, tactical assault, quick demolition, capture the flag, fast flag capture, and hunter—a *Predator*-like mode in which one cloaked player preys on the hapless grunts. Though the level lineup isn't huge, the levels themselves are enormous, and most have a vehicle or two that can be piloted by the player (most memorable: the Ogre, a 10-foot-tall mech). Some of the games are fairly complex and can last half an hour or more. Combine this with an only slightly reduced arsenal as compared to the single-player mode, and you end up with an online mode that's going to be as tough on newcomers as *Pandora Tomorrow*'s. As a result, it's likely to become the arena where the truly hardcore come to test their mettle.

PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

A BLIZZARD OF FPS INNOVATION

***Project: Snowblind* seems** tailor-made for first-person-shooter veterans looking for something a little different and a little more complex than your everyday console FPS. There's plenty to get the attention of newcomers, sure, but it's the hardcore FPS fans that are most likely to appreciate *Snowblind*'s intricacies.

For example, your arsenal of weapons, gadgets, and powers is truly mind-boggling. And a good percentage of these—the spider-bot grenade, the riot wall, and the flechette gun, for example—are far outside the FPS norm, which is doubly impressive. As a result, if you so desire, you can play the game with a great deal of methodical strategy. If you're willing to constantly switch up your weapons, gadgets, and powers, you can take each level step by careful step and really dominate. It's too bad the game doesn't really reward you for doing so, however; there's enough health and ammo lying around to let you generally get through a level easily if you just charge ahead, guns blazing.

Of course, in doing so you wouldn't be able to properly admire the beautiful environments, loaded with fancy graphical effects and lots of little details. The levels are also surprisingly complex; you'll find multiple paths to just about any destination, not to mention loads of little out-of-the-way nooks and crannies that hold especially useful equipment.

All this detail seems to have come at a fairly heavy price, though: You'll find yourself passing through the same areas on several different missions. To be fair, you'll notice some pretty major changes each time through—generally the result of grumpy enemies with heavy firepower—but that doesn't really lessen the sense of déjà vu. When the game looks this good, I want to see more of it, not the same bits over and over.

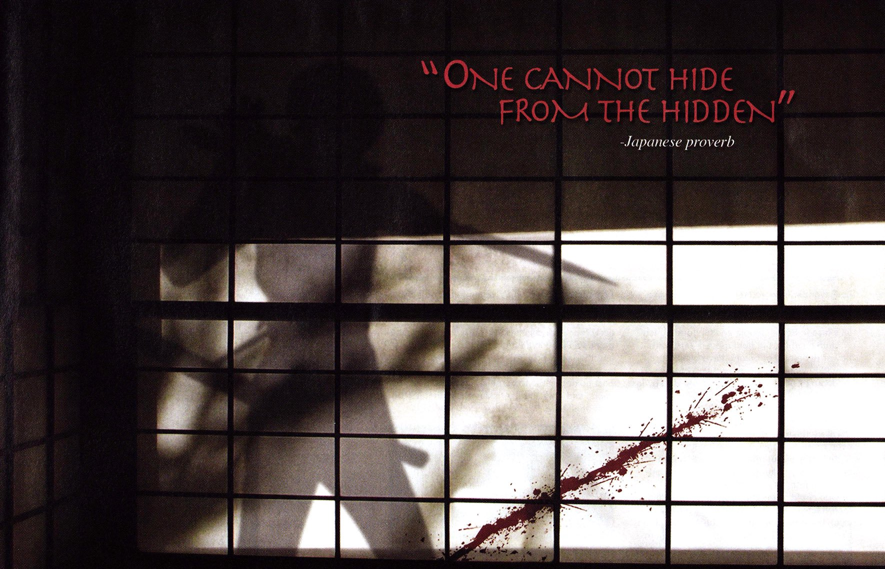
It also must be said that *Snowblind*'s character models are some of the worst I've seen since the PS1's heyday. You'll wander through these gorgeous levels, agog at the soft lighting and dramatic cinematography—and then wince painfully as a cut-scene pops up and subjects you to characters who look like an EyeToy face-mapping experiment gone horribly, horribly wrong. All in all, though, it's not that big a deal, as the story is just an excuse to deploy you with all these nifty gadgets. What I'm saying is, you certainly won't miss much if you take advantage of the cut-scenes to hit the restroom or refill your soda.

If *Snowblind* had a more compelling story or rewarded you for exploring its complexities, it could have been an instant classic. Ultimately, though, it's yet another solid shooter in a season of solid shooters. FPS addicts looking for a new twist will be able to uncover lots of innovations here (especially online, see sidebar), but newcomers to the genre won't find as much to get excited about. « *Joe Rybicki*

PROS Lots of innovative weapons and gadgets, beautiful environments, unusually deep online mode
CONS Forgettable story, reused levels, may be too complex for newbies

Pub. Eidos **Dev.** Crystal Dynamics **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●●●○


"ONE CANNOT HIDE
FROM THE HIDDEN"
-Japanese proverb

"(TENCHU) FATAL SHADOWS REDEFINES THE STEALTH GENRE." *GameDaily*

PlayStation 2
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FATAL SHADOWS
M
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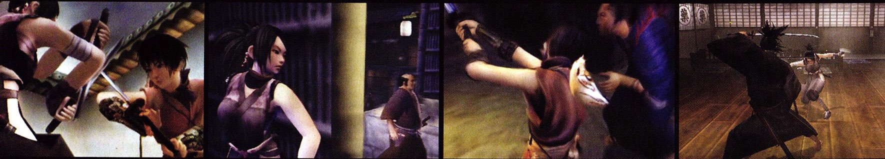

MATURE 17+
M
Blood
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PlayStation 2

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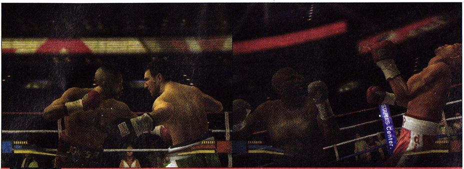


FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

OH, SWEET SCIENCE!

Ever wonder how you'd handle yourself in a fight? Despite the inner hippie in all of us preaching peace and keeping our heads cool, let's face it: Some people need a good punch.

Until recently, the fluid movements and power dynamics of boxing have been represented in videogames by pressing buttons. The inadequacy of such a setup was exposed by last year's *Fight Night 2004*. After a brief rest during which EA tried to control the swelling (of profits, you see), it comes back out swinging in *Round 2*, where the total punch control is refined to be even more responsive to your natural fight-or-flight instincts. Another new addition is the powerful haymaker punch, which really captures the intensity of the sport.

One could argue the haymakers are a little too effective. Not only are they incredibly powerful, but it takes a while for the AI to catch on that hey, maybe he should try blocking them. Aside from this, *Round 2* is hampered only by minor issues: a repetitive ring announcer, an even more repetitive soundtrack, and a peculiarly repetitive save system (after each fight, the game will independently save your game file and then your profile).

It's safe to say that *Fight Night Round 2* is the best boxing game to come along in the past 15 years, and only slightly riskier to say that it's the best of all time. « *Andrew Pfister*

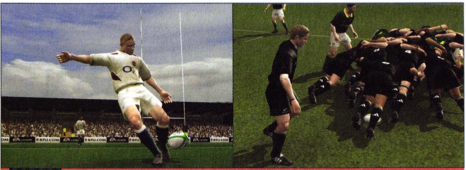
PROS Stunning textures, character models, and particle effects (i.e., blood flying everywhere)... you almost kinda feel bad for the guy
CONS No way to practice the training programs, even though only one is really useful

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Sports **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●◐]

MY HEART'S DEVOTION

In 2001, *Round 2* cover boy Bernard Hopkins was in New York to promote his upcoming bout with Félix Trinidad when he took Trinidad's miniature Puerto Rican flag and threw it to the ground. Sadly, this did not make it as an in-game taunt.



RUGBY 2005

THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

Rugby is the bastard child of sporting events in America, which is too bad: It's like football, but since it's played without helmets or pads, it's more badass than the gridiron could ever hope to be. EA Canada brings this sport Stateside once more with *Rugby 2005*, which features the big teams from around the world along with tournament modes such as Tri-Nations and Super 12. The game also features the EA Sports tradition of being able to create your own player; you can manage the aesthetics of your alter ego as well as attributes like speed, agility, and field abilities.

For newcomers, the handy Rugby 101 training videos offer a detailed overview of the basics. There are also training exercises with detailed voiceovers and onscreen cues to guide you through the process of scoring a try, completing a tackle, and passing or punting the ball. Finally, a practice mode provides time to practice what you have learned before entering one of the tournaments and going for gold.

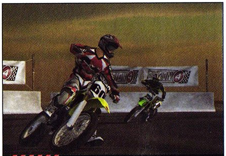
While the game boasts responsive controls and enhanced graphics over last year's entry, pulling off some of the tackles and passes seems more difficult it should. It would have been a welcome addition to be able to bring the camera in closer to the action.

Overall, *Rugby 2005* gives you an adequate adrenaline rush and provides a realistic experience (minus the bruises and broken bones, of course), but it lacks the polish of other EA Sports titles. « *Logan Parr*

VERDICT Fans hungry for scrum action might want to try it, but others should take a pass.

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Canada **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●◐○○]



MX VS. ATV UNLEASHED

I WANT TO RIDE MY BICYCLE

While we were all busy taking up arms in the bloody Coke vs. Pepsi, Freddy vs. Jason, and DLR vs. Sammy wars, another bitter rivalry was apparently brewing right under our noses. If you had to choose one—and only one—method of racing other people on a dirt surface, what would you choose? The answer to that question can be found in *MX vs. ATV Unleashed*, another excellent racing title from Rainbow Studios (formerly of the *ATV Offroad Fury* franchise).

A more accurate title might be *MX vs. ATV vs. Dune Buggy vs. Helicopter vs. Pretty Much Any Other Vehicle You Can Race*. The championship mode features the titular matchup of motocross bikes and four-wheelers, but several of the game's extra modes feature other vehicles as well, lest you think that dirt bikes and ATVs offer a limiting race experience.

Rainbow's experience in the genre is evident in the game's polished graphics, smooth framerate, and floaty-but-fun controls. The vehicles are fairly well balanced, with bikes being able to grab more air while the ATVs have easier landings. In fact, that's the biggest issue with *Unleashed*: It's often difficult to judge where your bike wheels are lined up, which leads to a multitude of crashes. Fortunately, the game doesn't punish you too harshly, and it's easy to make up lost time. (As with Rainbow's previous racers, it's easy for your computer opponents to make up lost time too, due to the aggressive "rubberband" assistance.)

As for which mode of transportation is better, that battle will likely rage on for years to come. Or at least until they make *MX vs. ATV vs. Horse*. « *Andrew Pfister*

GOOD Even though it's limited to off-roading, there's still a lot to do
EVIL A soundtrack featuring Nickelback, Linkin Park, and Unwritten Law

Pub. THQ **Dev.** Rainbow Studios **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●●●○]

HEAD VS. GROUND

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, between 1982 and 2001 more than 4,500 Americans were killed while riding an ATV. The CPSC also says that less than 10 percent of ATV riders undergo safety training. The lesson? Don't be dumb on your ATV.

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SMART SAVE

Devil May Cry 3's saving system is pretty clever. While it doesn't let you save anywhere, it does let you save all the data at any point in the game, so if you die, you retain the same number of red orbs that you had before you died. You can use this to your advantage by collecting as many red orbs as possible before a tough boss or difficult section, saving, and then collecting more red orbs that you can then use to purchase health items or weapon power-ups.

DEVIL MAY CRY 3:

WELCOME BACK, DANTE

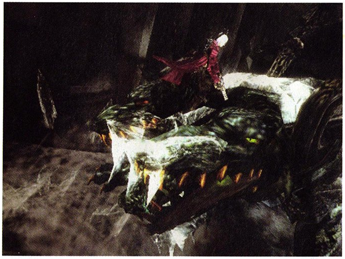
It's nearly impossible to overstate how close *Devil May Cry 2* came to completely destroying the *Devil May Cry* franchise. The wisecracking Dante from the original game was replaced with a mute in a red trench coat while the lavish gothic environments were decimated in favor of your run-of-the-mill towns, cities, and skyscrapers—albeit skyscrapers that had demons running around inside of them. Even the action was seriously lacking the elements present in the first game, which proved that all the hectic craziness of a 2D action game could make the jump to a polygonal world.

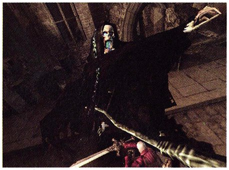
Indeed, *Devil May Cry 2*'s very existence didn't bode well for the future of the franchise, since the effort put forth in that game was so lacking that it seemed Capcom just didn't particularly care for Dante and company any more. Which is why it's a bit of a shock, and a welcome surprise, that *Devil May Cry 3* is good—really good. It rights just about every single one of *Devil May Cry 2*'s wrongs and successfully redeems the series.

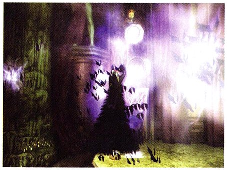
And it all starts with Dante. His personality really shines through in *Devil May Cry 3*, and it's not just because you have this character saying "dude" or any variety of brazen comments, but rather it's because of who he's saying them to and the circumstances involved. How often do you see a character nonchalantly address the Lord of Darkness? In any case, nearly every cut-scene in the game does an excellent job of harnessing this juxtaposition, resulting in some genuinely entertaining and amusing moments.

The cut-scenes are an important part of what makes *Devil May Cry 3* so good. They do a great job of giving the characters some depth, thanks to some surprisingly good voice acting and the most over-the-top action sequences you have ever seen. Actually, some of the action sequences are so damn good that action-film directors will probably smack themselves on the forehead and ask, "Why didn't I think of that?" after witnessing some of the surreal stuff that Dante and the supporting cast do in this game. Oftentimes, you may find yourself going back to the game repeatedly just to check them out.

Don't mistake this as some trick for hiding lackluster gameplay. These cut-scenes are more like icing on an action-packed cake with various layers of deliciousness created by Dante's different fighting techniques. There are six techniques to choose from (some are unlocked as you progress through the game), and each focuses on a single aspect of Dante's abilities. For example, if you use the sword master style, you can unlock new sword attacks and combinations, some of which prove to be quite useful later in the game. Conversely, you can choose a technique







THE DOWNSIDE

The only really annoying thing about *Devil May Cry 3* involves the puzzles. While most of them aren't all that difficult, some require you to do a little backtracking, and sometimes it's not too clear where you're supposed to go unless you've checked out certain places on your journey. Actually, if you're not careful, you may find yourself all the way back at the very start of the game, which isn't all that fun, but it *is* a testament to cohesive level design.

DANTE'S AWAKENING

like trickster, which doesn't really affect any weapons but enables Dante to master new evasive moves. There's a distinct difference between each style, so much so that you play the game differently to take advantage of the one you have equipped in a particular situation. Plus, some of them are just plain fun to use, especially if you're trying to create some spectacular combinations that involve all kinds of aerial and ground maneuvers. The only downside is that you can only level up some techniques by using them throughout the entire game, which is certainly doable in theory but can be difficult to accomplish in reality.

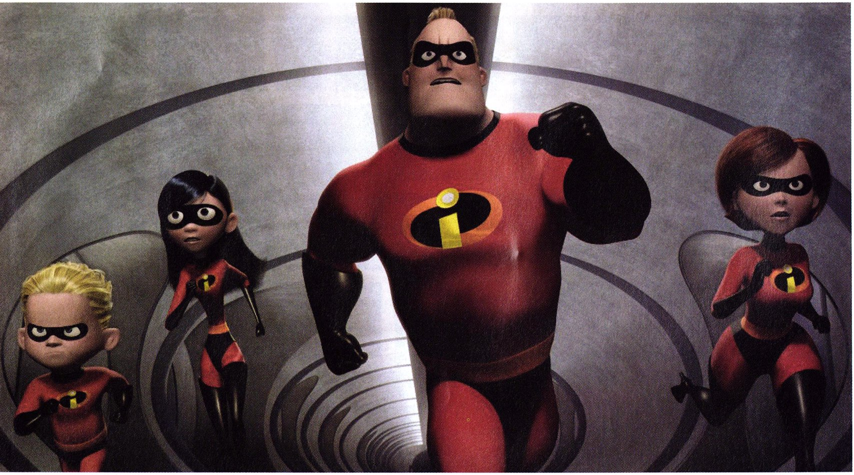
Speaking of difficulty, the various demons and creatures from the depths of hell put up quite a fight in *Devil May Cry 3*. This stems from a variety of factors, not the least of which is the intelligence level of some enemies. Since some of them are actually capable of blocking Dante's attacks, manic slashing and shooting simply doesn't work all the time. You have to be a bit more crafty and observant of the ways enemies move around if you don't want Dante to die within seconds of meeting these foes. Still, Dante will die quite a bit, but it's never really frustrating, because during each fight, whether it's against a boss or in a particularly tricky spot in a level, you discover a new weakness and adapt your strategy and fighting style accordingly.

Devil May Cry 3 is a lot like Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden* in that sense. Capcom took the formula that worked so well for the original *Devil May Cry* and added depth with new techniques that work incredibly well given the way enemies act in the game. This—plus the excellent cut-scenes, amazing backgrounds, and great character models—proves *Devil May Cry 3* is a worthy successor to Dante's original adventure. Even better, it shows how great this series is when Capcom puts effort into it. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Nearly every aspect of the game is fantastic. Great character designs, awesome-looking levels, responsive controls, and some excellent action
CONS Some of the backtracking can be tiresome

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** M **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●◐]



THE INCREDIBLES

(Craig T. Nelson, Holly Hunter)

PIXAR HITS PAYDIRT AGAIN by John Scalzi

***The Incredibles* was not only** the best science-fiction film of 2004, it's also probably the best superhero film ever (and if not, it and the first two *Superman* films are locked in an interesting three-way death grip). It reaches such an exalted position by doing two things well: First, it's about something. Second, it has a lot of fun being about something. Lots of films aim for the first of these, but very few manage the second, particularly in the realm of superhero films.

And what is the film about? It's about the cathartic release that comes when you actually get to be yourself and not some closeted, defeated version thereof. Mr. Incredible (voiced by Craig T. Nelson) starts the movie in blissful superhero mode but is quickly jammed into a "normal" life when lawsuits from his superhero adventures pile up (as, of course, they would in the real world). This leads to furtive adventures on the side and finally a secret hero life he hides from his also-super wife and kids, and naturally that will have repercussions for all of them, particularly the kids, who have been told to keep a lid on their superpowers. Anyone who has had to live some or part of their life tamped down is going to identify—and since that's most people, you can see why this film was such a big hit.

The great thing about *The Incredibles* is that it doesn't bash you in the head with its theme—you get what's being said, but you're mostly just getting a heck of a superhero story. Writer and director Brad Bird doesn't belabor the point; as with other Pixar films, the filmmakers trust their audience. That's incredible enough as it is. And it is much appreciated.

RATING [●●●●●]

ALFIE

(Jude Law, Marisa Tomei)

Alfie (Jude Law) cuts a swath through New York's female population with a wink and a smile, mostly because he looks like Jude Law and has a British accent. The central conceit of this film worked the first time, in 1966 (with Michael Caine as Alfie), when a guy could be a cad and it was considered charming. Here in the 21st century, it just means you're a dick—in real life, a male ho like Alfie would be weighted with cement and dropped off the Staten Island ferry. Even if he looks like Jude Law.

RATING [●●◐○○]

FINDING NEVERLAND

(Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet)

Finding Neverland is something of an intellectual dare: Is it possible to make a film about an effeminate male playwright who is obsessed with a family of young boys and not have it tip into unseemly "Jesus juice" territory? Happily for everyone involved—including the audience—the answer is yes. Johnny Depp's J.M. Barrie (who wrote *Peter Pan*) is guileless and sweet and pretty much asexual—his attraction to a family of boys (and their mother, played by Kate Winslet) isn't driven by unseemly adult needs but rather by a desire to get the most out of their childhood. Even so, these attentions and their motivations don't go uncommented on. But in the end, thanks to Depp's gentle performance, this is one Neverland you'd be happy to have your kids visit, and you'll be glad you tagged along as well.

RATING [●●●●○]

BAMBI

(Bambi, Thumper)

Did you know that the deer population in the States is larger than it was when the Pilgrims arrived? Part of the reason: This movie, in which the offing of Bambi's mother was so traumatic to wee little baby boomers that as grown-ups they can't bring themselves to kill a deer, even when the damn things are flinging themselves at cars. This film is a bit guilelessly sweet for today's taste, but it's still fine animation, and yes, you'll choke up when Bambi's mom eats a bullet.

RATING [●●●●○]

EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING

(Stellan Skarsgård, Izabella Scorupco)

For my money, *The Exorcist* is the best horror film ever made, but it's not nearly as terrifying as the mess subsequent filmmakers have made out of the sequels. This new one is no less of a mess, probably because the entire film was reshot with a new director (Renny Harlin) after the original director (Paul Schrader) produced something with less gore and more suspense than the backer wanted. Having seen this version, I have to say that the scrapped version couldn't be any less painful.

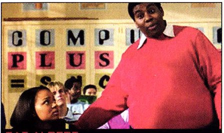
RATING [●○○○○]

BRIDGET JONES: EDGE OF REASON

(Renée Zellweger, Hugh Grant)

Like the first film of the series, this movie is predicated on the notion that there's a heterosexual man on the planet who wouldn't drag himself over glass shards to date Renée Zellweger, even if she weighs 20 pounds more than usual (i.e., weighs as much as she's actually supposed to). Sorry, no go. But as with the first go around, this is light and breezy fun, and it's fun to watch Hugh Grant and Colin Firth fight over cute little Renée all over again. Date film? Oh yeah.

RATING [●●●◐○]



FAT ALBERT

(Kenan Thompson, Kyla Pratt)

This is a moderately cute kids' film featuring characters that I'm not sure anyone under the age of 20 is even aware of. For those of us who are old enough to remember the original run, there's also something profoundly disturbing about having these oddly dressed characters cross over to the real world (as they do—right out of the TV!) and still look like they do in the cartoon. Some people should remain 2D, and Fat Albert and his pals are among them.

RATING [●●●○○]

CLOSER

(Julia Roberts, Clive Owen)

If you've been looking for a film in which really attractive people do really unpleasant things to each other emotionally, boy howdy, has your ship come in. Julia Roberts, Clive Owen, Natalie Portman, and Jude Law play four people who mix and match among each other and generally try to see just how badly they can treat the others before the film stock runs out. Excellently acted and gripping in its way, but man, it makes you glad your own relationship is just pleasantly puttering along.

RATING [●●●●○]

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE

(Tom Kenny, David Hasselhoff)

There's a controversy regarding SpongeBob, whom some believe to be a front for pushing the Secret Gay Agenda on kids—one day they're watching a yellow sponge frolic in sea flowers, the next they're asking for Tom of Finland action figures. Aside from the ridiculousness of assuming SpongeBob is gay—if anyone's gay on that show, it's Squidward—I'd rather serve up the Secret Gay Agenda to my kid in the form of this silly, zippy film than the Overt Stupid Agenda those guys have got.

RATING [●●●◐○]

DVD RELEASES

March 1
Bambi
The Brady Bunch: Season 1
Exorcist: The Beginning
The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie

March 8
Friends: Season 9
Ghost Ship
Ladder 49

March 15
Alfie

March 22
Being Julia
Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason
Fat Albert
Finding Neverland

March 29
After the Sunset
Astro Boy: The Complete Series
Closer

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SONY
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122>

PORTABLE

TAKE A TRIP INTO THE PAST TO VISIT THE PSP'S PREDECESSORS

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INSIDE

126 **MERCENARIES**
Become a bounty hunter with these useful maps

128 **GOOD/BAD/UGLY**
The first-person shooter genre's greatest hits and misses

129 **REVIEW ARCHIVE**
Every PS2 game we've ever reviewed, plus bonus tricks!

130 **CHAMPIONS: RETURN TO ARMS**
How to get the best weapon in the game

132 **READER REVIEWS**
You say good, we say bad, let's call the whole thing off

134 **BEHIND THE GAME: WIPEOUT**
It's returning on PSP, so see where this classic came from

136 **THE SPORTS GUY**
Sports game of the year—already?

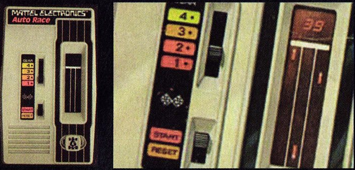
PSPREDECESSORS

THE LINEAGE OF SONY'S PORTABLE JUGGERNAUT

The PlayStation Portable launch might be the most important thing Sony has ever done. Although the new handheld's arrival mercifully lacks the hype that surrounded the PS2's debut, the stakes are just as high. Currently, Nintendo's Game Boy Advance and DS control almost 100 percent of the portable game market, and the likes of Mario and Pokémon have enjoyed a near-monopoly for more than 15 years.

But Sony knows consumer gadgets. The company became a major player with the success of its portable Walkman music player; the MiniDisc is still considered one of the best music formats ever devised; and Vaio computers command a degree of user loyalty normally enjoyed only by Apple products.

If the people at Sony are serious about making the PSP a hit—and we're sure they are—then they've surely studied their history. Portable gaming has been around nearly 30 years, and the successes and failures over the past three decades offer plenty of lessons for anyone aspiring to throw their hat into the handheld ring. So as you're clutching your PSP presale stub, anticipating the future of portable gaming, join us for this look back at its past—and what we can learn from it.



MATTEL ELECTRONICS HANDHELD GAMES

DEBUT DATE: 1976

What is it? A series of basic LED (and later LCD) toys that introduced the concept of portable electronic gaming to the world. Many models are still being sold through places like RadioShack.

PSPrecedent: Though simple, Mattel's portable sports and action games were essential firsts in the medium. Sure, they were basically nothing more than blinking LEDs on a screen painted to look like a basketball court or cityscape or baseball diamond, but they proved that handheld videogames are perfect diversions when you're on the go and launched an entire format as a result.

microvision
BLOCK BUSTER
microvision

MILTON BRADLEY MICROVISION

DEBUT DATE: 1979

What is it? The world's first cartridge-based handheld system. Although most of its titles were primitive sports or board games, it offered a few surprising stand-outs, including one of the earliest known licensed games: *Star Trek Phaser Strike*.

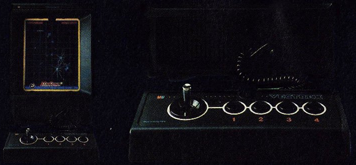
PSPrecedent: Utterly primitive by current standards—the Microvision had a black-and-white screen spanning a meager 16x16 pixels—the Microvision was nevertheless a vital step toward today's portable systems, thanks to its major innovation, interchangeable cartridges. Unlike Mattel's handhelds, each of which had a single game hardwired into its circuits, Microvision games could be purchased separately from the game unit.

NINTENDO GAME & WATCH

DEBUT DATE: 1980

What is it? A series of nearly 60 different self-contained game systems created by Gumpei Yokoi. 1UP.com listed Game & Watch as one of the most influential games ever made (see essential50.1up.com).

PSPrecedent: Like the PSP, Game & Watch was a multipurpose handheld system, though obviously less sophisticated: Each title contained both a game and a simple alarm clock. The G&W series also introduced the cross-shaped D-pad—a fixture of all modern systems (including the PSP) in some form or another. Its clever use of preprinted LCD screens allowed for much more detailed and entertaining gameplay than the Microvision and was widely copied.



CGE/MILTON BRADLEY VECTREX

DEBUT DATE: 1982

What is it? A self-contained tabletop game system featuring sophisticated vector graphics.

PSPrecedent: The Vectrex strains the definition of "portable," given that it weighs several pounds and has to be played with the unit sitting on a table. Nevertheless, it's worthy of a mention for being the first 3D-capable portable console; its vector-based monitor allowed for the creation of wire-frame polygonal visuals.

NINTENDO GAME BOY FAMILY

DEBUT DATE: 1989

What is it? The most successful videogame system in history, and the console that made handheld gaming more than a mere novelty. It came in four major variants: the chunky original style, the slim Game Boy Pocket (1996), the Japan-only Game Boy Light (1997), and the NES-like Game Boy Color (1998).

PSPrecedent: There's an urban legend that goes like this: When Nintendo introduced the Game Boy, Sony's president chastised his engineers for failing to have come up with the idea first. In a sense, the PSP represents 15 years of waiting for the opportune time to pounce on Nintendo's throat. There's no doubt Sony would love to duplicate Game Boy's success—since 1989, the system and its progeny have sold close to 200 million hardware units.

ATARI LYNX

DEBUT DATE: 1989

What is it? A portable system released shortly after the Game Boy. Though far more powerful than Nintendo's system, it was doomed by its high price and power consumption and an initially unimpressive software lineup.

PSPrecedent: Despite its failings, Lynx was the world's first color portable, with an absolutely beautiful backlit screen that made the murky Game Boy LCD look pitiful in comparison. Its design was actually quite similar to the PSP's, with a wide case that showed the system's excellent visuals to great effect. The Lynx ultimately lost the handheld wars, though many fans feel that if it had been released before the Game Boy (the hardware was completed in 1987), it would have had a chance.

SEGA GAME GEAR

DEBUT DATE: 1991

What is it? Sega's original entry into the handheld arena (the second, Nomad, was simply a portable Genesis). Although it sold better than Lynx, thanks to its name, it was nevertheless crushed by Game Boy and slowly faded into obsolescence

PSPrecedent: Like the Lynx, Game Gear's impressive hardware did a serious number on its battery life—an issue rumored to plague the PSP as well. More positively, the Game Gear set a precedent for PSP's movie playback capabilities. It represented the first convergence of portable gaming and portable video, thanks to a popular TV tuner add-on device that effectively converted the system into a tiny color television.

PSPREVENTION

PSPREVENTION

Not every handheld over the years has been a winner. Sony would do well to learn from these flops—specifically, what not to do.

NINTENDO VIRTUAL BOY

DEBUT DATE: 1995

What is it? One of the worst gaming systems ever. A cross between a Game Boy and a virtual-reality sim, Virtual Boy was huge, overpriced, underpowered, and unwanted. Worse yet, it was neither portable nor playable.

PSPrevention: The PSP has already managed to avoid repeating every one of Virtual Boy's failings. If anything, Virtual Boy proves that Nintendo's portable dominance isn't iron clad—and that no matter how successful you are, it never pays to be overconfident.

BANDAI WONDERSWAN FAMILY

DEBUT DATE: 1998

What is it? A low-cost alternative to Game Boy created by the father of handheld gaming, Gumpei Yokoi.

PSPrevention: The WonderSwan wasn't a bad idea, but it suffered from falling a little too far behind the technology curve. More problematic was the software lineup, which consisted mostly of bad ports and terrible anime-licensed dreck. Bandai's system ended up as yet another also-ran in the struggle to top Game Boy. The PSP has impressive power, but it will need a first-rate software lineup to dethrone Nintendo.

NOKIA N-GAGE

DEBUT DATE: 2003

What is it? Nokia's bid at building a handheld system into a cell phone, universally deemed a failure thanks to its cumbersome design and weak software library.

PSPrevention: The PSP has practically won this already, thanks to the fact that you don't have to hold it like a taco. The biggest problem that faced the N-Gage was the fact that Nokia couldn't decide whether it was a phone or a console, meaning it didn't work well as either. The PSP is a risky attempt at creating a multipurpose device...but as long as Sony remembers that PSP is first and foremost about the games, it will avoid the N-Gage's terrible fate.

POWER
COLOR
OPTION
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49

SNK NEOGEO POCKET FAMILY

DEBUT DATE: 1999

What is it? A short-lived but critically acclaimed portable system intended as a portable counterpart to SNK's venerable NeoGeo hardware. More powerful than Game Boy Color, the NGPC played host to a library of clever arcade ports.
PSPrecedent: The NGPC was the first handheld to make use of console connectivity, allowing players to transmit data to certain Dreamcast games. But the real strength of the NGPC was its library, which showed a profound understanding of the differences between consoles and portables. Games like *Match of the Millennium* and *Metal Slug: 2nd Mission* captured the feel of the NeoGeo games that inspired them, but were carefully redesigned to work within the limits of the portable format—a lesson everyone could do well to imitate.

GAME BOY
Nintendo
GAME BOY ADVANCE

NINTENDO GAME BOY ADVANCE FAMILY

DEBUT DATE: 2001

What was it? Nintendo's true successor to the Game Boy lineup and currently a seemingly infinite source of money for the company. This is the system the PSP has to beat—and despite the power of Sony's new system, the GBA has both a huge installed base and 16 years of mindshare working in its favor.
PSPrecedent: The Game Boy Advance demonstrates just how much is at stake in the handheld market. As GameCube sales have deteriorated to a distant third place in the home console market, the GBA has single-handedly kept Nintendo in the black, and done so almost entirely on the strength of great software like *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*. The GBA is definitely the PSP's biggest threat, but it also gives Sony something to aim for.

NINTENDO DS
NINTENDO DS

NINTENDO DS

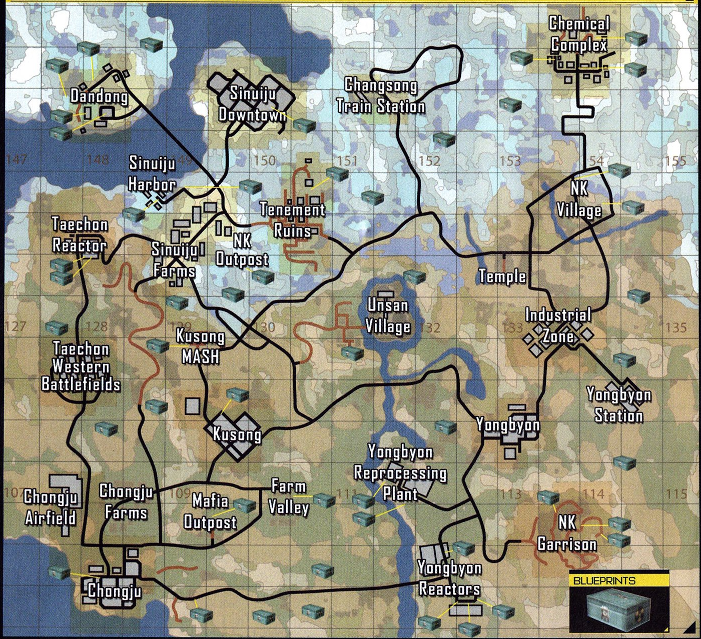
DEBUT DATE: 2004

What is it? The so-called third pillar of Nintendo's hardware lineup, "DS" is short for "dual screens": a reference to the two-screened, clamshell design of the system. More interesting, however, is the fact that the lower screen is touch sensitive, giving the DS a unique user interface that Nintendo claims will create new ways of thinking about game design. Though it has the ability to create 3D graphics, they're N64-caliber at best...a far cry from the PSP's amazing visuals.
PSPrecedent: The DS is still young and unproven, and it occupies a strange place in the market. Is it a direct competitor to the PSP? Its creator claims it's not; the guiding principle behind the DS, according to Nintendo, is to foster innovative new design concepts in videogame development. It's a risky gamble and has already inspired a flood of Virtual Boy comparisons, but at the same time, the DS does possess a definite appeal for casual gamers—the exact people Sony will need to woo with the PSP. « *Jeremy Parish*

MERCENARIES

BOUNTY HUNTING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

N BLUEPRINT LOCATIONS


Chemical Complex
Dandong
Sinuiju Downtown
Changsong Train Station
Sinuiju Harbor
Tenement Ruins
NK Village
Taechon Reactor
Sinuiju Farms
NK Outpost
Temple
Unsan Village
Industrial Zone
Kusong MASH
Taechon Western Battlefields
Yongbyon Station
Kusong
Yongbyon
Yongbyon Reprocessing Plant
Chongju Airfield
Chongju Farms
Mafia Outpost
Farm Valley
NK Garrison
Yongbyon Reactors
Chongju
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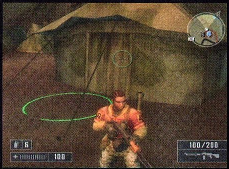
BLUEPRINTS

Looking to amass a vast fortune in cash, alternate characters, and other *Mercenaries* goodies? We've got the goods on collectable bounties and other unlockables—complete with maps showing where to find the important objects. Check back next month for even more!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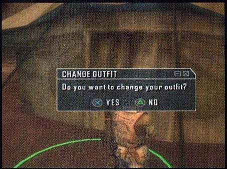
100
100/200

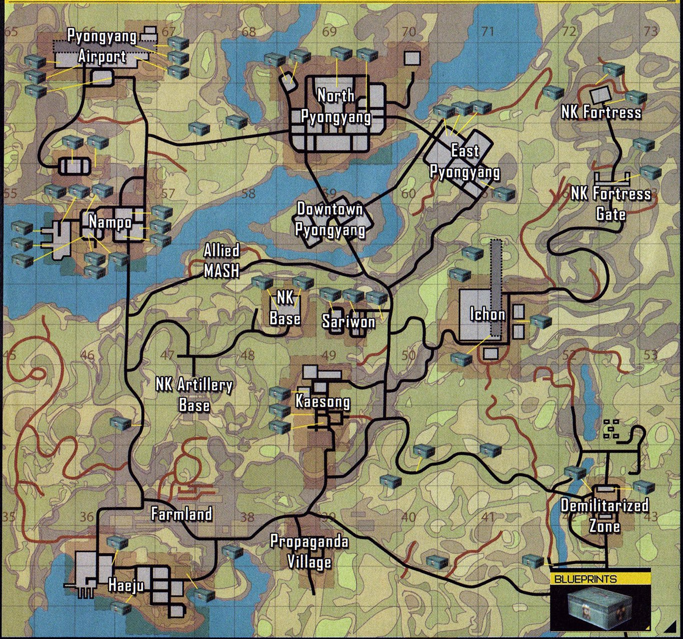

CHANGE OUTFIT

Do you want to change your outfit?

UNLOCKABLES

You unlock an alternate outfit for your character after completing the ace of diamonds contract for the Allied Nations. Visit the MASH in the northwest province and look for an aqua-colored circle near a tent. Stand within the circle and press the Action button to change your character's clothing.

S BLUEPRINT LOCATIONS


Pyongyang Airport
North Pyongyang
NK Fortress
East Pyongyang
NK Fortress Gate
Downtown Pyongyang
Nampo
Allied MASH
NK Base
Sariwon
Ichon
NK Artillery Base
Kaesong
Farmland
Propaganda Village
Haeju
Demilitarized Zone
BLUEPRINTS
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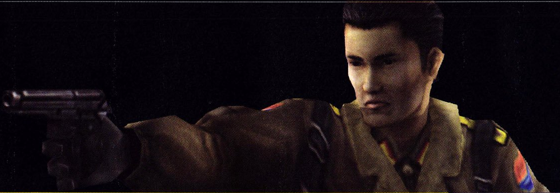
BLUEPRINT REWARDS

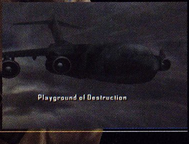
Blueprints are a common type of bounty item. Collecting them earns you some cash and improves the South Korean Union's mood toward you. Here's what you get for collecting blueprints:

BLUEPRINTS COLLECTED REWARD	
1	All C4 crate supply drop
5	Sniper rifle supply drop
10	Stinger supply drop
15	Antitank rocket supply drop
20	Cheat: Play as Mafia heavy soldier
30	Cheat: Play as NK elite soldier
40	Prototype rifle supply drop
50	Cheat: Play as NK number card (Spades)
60	Cash: $100,000
70	Cash: $100,000
80	Cash: $250,000
90	Cash: $250,000
100	Cash: $500,000
110	Cheat: Play as Han Solo



PLAYGROUND OF DESTRUCTION MODE

You unlock playground of destruction mode when you complete the game. After verifying General Song—the ace of spades—save your game when prompted. Load this saved game and you will start from the very beginning again, but this time, you've got all of the cash you earned and all of the support items you unlocked on your first playthrough at your disposal. Playground of destruction, indeed!

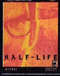

Playground of Destruction

CHEAT GUN
You unlock the cheat gun after verifying every card in the game. To earn the cheat gun, you must verify not only each of the face cards and aces, but all of the number cards in the deck of 52 as well. We won't spoil the surprise by telling you what it does, but rest assured that the cheat gun is by far the ultimate weapon in the game!

GOOD / BAD / UGLY: FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

HOLSTER UP, KIDS

GOOD



HALF-LIFE

This game became *the* genre-definer for FPS games when it came out on the PC in 1998. It came to the PS2 three years later, and despite dated graphics and an occasionally buggy framerate, it still made jaws drop and hearts pound.

SCORE [●●●●●]

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

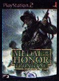
This action-packed gem dodges the "It's no *GoldenEye*" bullet with a Bond-authentic story line, terrific level design, and a nice variety of multiplayer options. Throw in playable vehicles (including a sub) and Pierce Brosnan's likeness, and you have an instant Bond classic.

SCORE [●●●●◐]

KILLZONE

Somehow, *Medal of Honor 57* got caught in some crazy wormhole that sent it back through the infinite reaches of time and space and into the year 2004. *Killzone* is the legitimate heir to the *Medal of Honor* franchise. Sure, it needs a fair bit of polish, but its grittiness and solid gameplay help it stand its ground. That, and it has the best gun-reloading animations in the history of, uh, gun-reloading animation.

SCORE [●●●●○]



MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

Though the series fell flat afterward, *Frontline* set the standard for massively cinematic World War II shooters (which has practically become a genre all its own). The invasion of Normandy is still one of the most memorable opening scenes in gaming.

SCORE [●●●●●]

QUAKE III: REVOLUTION

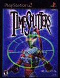
Though it could be argued that the *Quake* formula had already started to smell a bit stale by the time *Revolution* came out, the clever bots, speedy play, and graphically impressive settings made for an ideal quick FPS fix. Too bad PS2 wasn't online yet.

SCORE [●●●●◐]

RED FACTION

Red Faction proved that good PS2 shooters are perfectly capable of existing—it also lets you blow stuff up! Lots! Not just bad dudes, but whole walls and stuff. Sure, the Geo-Mod system is imperfect, but you have to give credit to *Red Faction* for jump-starting that whole destructible-environment craze.

SCORE [●●●●●]

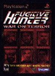


TIMESPLITTERS

Beautiful, funny, and astonishingly fast paced, *TimeSplitters* blasted onto the FPS scene in the PS2's infancy. So far the only game to top it for sheer speed has been its fantastic sequel, which ups the ante in terms of story, minigames, and multiplayer madness.

SCORE [●●●●●]

BAD



FUGITIVE HUNTER

A game that lets you fight the notorious Osama bin Laden might have conceivably worked. But it totally doesn't, thanks to bin Laden's use of extremely crappy kung fu moves straight out of a 1992 fighting game. It's pretty sad that the sole highlight of a game that lets you fight bin Laden is a rap video that features the lyrics, "Osama bin Laden / Where you been hidin' / Lookin' for you / On the PS…2."

SCORE [●○○○○]

JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS. DEATH

The great thing about *Dredd vs. Death* is that there are no great things about it. If it were made in 1998, it probably would've been much more impressive and made more of a splash with its painfully basic mechanics.

SCORE [●●◐○○]

TUROK: EVOLUTION

We all know that dinosaurs (or dinosaur people in this case) had tiny peanut-sized brains, which probably wouldn't make them good enemies in a first-person shooter, but Acclaim didn't care. As a result, *Turok: Evolution* is often a depiction of lizard tomfoolery instead of heavy-duty action.

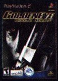
SCORE [●◐○○○]

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

This port of the PC blockbuster is the exact polar opposite of *Quake III: Revolution*: It is slower and uglier and features CPU-controlled bots with severely limited intelligence. The worst part is the subpar framerate—the kiss of death for FPSes.

SCORE [●●◐○○]

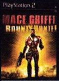
UGLY



GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

A perfect MI6 blueprint for wasted potential. There's a lot to like in the concept—groovy villainy, spy shenanigans, and wacky powers. What results from the EA wonderlab is a middling-at-best shooter that looks and plays like it came out right after the 1995 movie it shares its name with. A little more time in Q's lab could have made all the difference.

SCORE [●●●○○]



MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER

It is a great idea on paper: an FPS in which the main character can hop into a spaceship, whereupon the game turns into a space-dogfighting flight sim. Unfortunately, neither half of the equation got the development time it deserved.

SCORE [●●○○○]

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

The *Medal of Honor* franchise practically defined the craft of Nazi shooting. Yet *Rising Sun* is so especially mediocre that it managed to not only cripple *MOH*'s massive winning streak, but also prematurely kill the in-development sequel—meaning it has a cliffhanger ending that will never be resolved. Bravo!

SCORE [●●●◐○]

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

It has an intriguing story, nice weapon effects, and all the voices from the show. So what went wrong? A lazy port of the acclaimed PC hit, the PS2 version seems as lost as *Voyager* itself. Muddy graphics make some levels playable only to the most determined.

SCORE [●●◐○○]

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

Taken on its own, *Ghost Recon* isn't a bad game. But compare it to its counterparts on PC and Xbox, and it takes a nosedive. For some reason, the PS2 version lets you control only two squads, down from the three of the other versions. Oh, and then there's the lack of any online play….

SCORE [●●●◐○]

PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in black bars indicate a Greatest Hits title. Names in yellow indicate a score of 5 out of 5. ⚡indicates the game supports online play.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	●●●◖	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	●●●●	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	●●●●	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	●●●●	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	●●●●	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	●●●●	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	●●●●	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**51**
Ace Combat 5: The Unsung War	Namco	●●●●	87
Activision Anthology	Activision	●●●●	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	●●●	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●◖	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	●●●●◖	59
Airblade	Namco	●●●●	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	●●●	78
Alias	Acclaim	●●◖	81
Alien Hominid	0-3 Entertainment	●●●●	88
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	●●●◖	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	●●●◖	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	●●●◖	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	●●●	67
⚡All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	●●◖	80
Alter Echo	THQ	●●	73
American Idol	Codemasters	●	77
⚡Amplitude	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	●◖	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	70
Ape Escape: Primed & Pumped	Ubisoft	●●◖	88
Aqua Aqua	3DO	●●	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	●●●●	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	●	50
⚡Area 51	Midway	●●●●	90
Armored Core 2	Agetec	●●●	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	●●●◖	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	●●●◖	61
Armored Core: Nexus	Agetec	●●	85
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●◖	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●●	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	●●●●	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◖	45
Asterix & Obelix Kick Buttix	Atari	●●◖	85
Astro Boy	Sega	●●●	85
Atari Anthology	Atari	●●	89
Athens 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	83
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**42**
⚡ ATV Offroad Fury 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**64**
⚡ATV Offroad Fury 3	Sony CEA	●●●●	88
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	●●●●	66
⚡Auto Modellista	Capcom	●●◖	69
Backyard Baseball	Atari	●●◖	81
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	●●◖	75
Backyard Wrestling 2: There Goes the Neighborhood	Eidos	●◖	89
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	**Interplay**	●●●●◖	**52**
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Interplay	●●●◖	77
Barbarian	Titus	●●	57
The Bard's Tale	Vivendi Universal	●●●●◖	86
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	●◖	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	●●	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	●●●	51
Battle Assault 3	Bandai	●●◖	88
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	●●●◖	65
Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal	●●●	76
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubisoft	●●●●	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	●●●	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	●●◖	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	●●●●	67
Blade II	Activision	●●	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	●●●◖	57

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
BloodRayne	Majesco	●●●◖	63
BloodRayne 2	Majesco	●●●●◖	87
Blood Will Tell	Sega	●●●●	87
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	●●●◖	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	●	75
Blowout	Majesco	●●●	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	●◖	65
Bombastic	Capcom	●●◖	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	●●●●	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	●●●●	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	●●●	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	●●●◖	73
Bujingai: The Forsaken City	Bam	●●●●	82
Burnout	Acclaim	●●●●◖	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	●●●●	63
⚡Burnout 3: Takedown	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**85**
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	**Activision**	●●◖	**67**
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adv.	Activision	●●●	90
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	**Activision**	●●◖	**76**
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◖	74
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005 Season	Activision	●●●●◖	85
⚡Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activision	●●●●	89

Need a little help in your campaign? Use this code to unlock all the levels at the start of the game. You are now free to skip to any level you'd like.

ALL LEVELS At the Level Select screen, hold Up on controller two, then press Start, Select, Select, Square on controller one.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Capcom Fighting Evolution	Capcom	●◖	88
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◖	51
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	●●◖	77
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	●●	76
Catwoman	EA Games	●	84
⚡Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Sony Online	●●●●◖	78
⚡Champions: Return to Arms	Sony Online	●●●●◖	90
Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◖	70
⚡Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◖	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69
ChoroQ	Atlus	●●●◖	86
City Crisis	Take-Two	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Acclaim	●●●	83
Colin McRae Rally 3	**Codemasters**	●●●●●	**68**
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	**Gotham Games**	●◖	**63**
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74
Conflict: Vietnam	Global Star	●●◖	86
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◖	64
Corvette	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	**Universal**	●●●◖	**51**
⚡Crash 'N' Burn	Eidos	●●	87
Crash Nitro Kart	**Vivendi Universal**	●●●◖	**76**
Crash Twinsanity	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	86
Crazy Taxi	**Acclaim**	●●●●	**46**
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	●●●◖	80
Crimson Tears	Capcom	●●●◖	83
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◖	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◖	49
Dark Cloud	**Sony CEA**	●●●●◖	**46**
Dark Cloud 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**66**
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◖	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	**Acclaim**	●●●◖	**50**
DDR Extreme	Konami	●●●●	85
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◖	39
Dead to Rights	**Namco**	●●●	**65**
Death by Degrees	Namco	●◖	90
Def Jam Vendetta	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●	**67**
Def Jam Fight for NY	EA Games	●●●●◖	85

FORGOTTEN GEM

Draken: The Ancients' Gates was generally overlooked and underrated when it came out over three years ago. If the idea of an action-RPG with flying segments appeals to you (and no, it bears absolutely no relationship to *Drakengard*), pick it up cheap.

DID YOU KNOW?

The soundtrack to Sega's awesomely fun *Crazy Taxi* (published for PS2 by Acclaim) was provided entirely by punk rock superstars Bad Religion and the Offspring. If you like ridiculously unrealistic driving games, *Crazy Taxi* is one of the best examples of such.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE

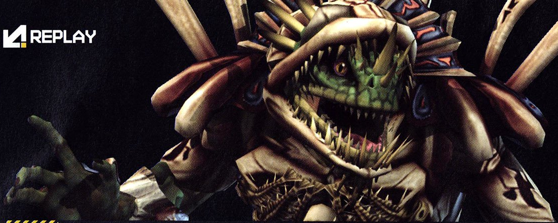
Want to play as your favorite rapper but don't have the heart to fight them in story mode in order to unlock them? Use the following codes to score yourself some reward points to unlock your favorites without violating your fan club membership.

To do this code, enter the password in the Cheat menu:

NEWJACK	100 reward points
THESOURCE	100 reward points
CROOKLYN	100 reward points

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Defender	Midway	●●●◖	62
⚡Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	●●◖	80
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◖	56
Devil May Cry	**Capcom**	●●●●●	**50**
Devil May Cry 2	**Capcom**	●●●	**66**
Digimon Rumble Arena 2	Bandai	●●●	88
Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	●●●●	76
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◖	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◖	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◖	64
A Dog's Life	Hip Interactive	●●	84
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◖	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◖	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	**Atari**	●●●◖	**65**
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	**Atari**	●●◖	**76**
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3	Atari	●●●●	88
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◖	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
Drakengard	Square Enix USA	●●	78
DRIV3R	Atari	●●●◖	83
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◖	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◖	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61
Duel Masters	Atari	●●●	89
The Dukes of Hazzard: Return of the General Lee	Ubisoft	●●●◖	87
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◖	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	●●●●◖	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	75
Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires	**Koei**	●●●●	**85**
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◖	56
Echo Night: Beyond	Agetec	●●●	84
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◖	61
⚡eJay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	**Atari**	●●●	**71**
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◖	49
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	●●●●●	**46**
⚡ESPN College Hoops	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	76
⚡ESPN College Hoops 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	88
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
⚡ESPN Major League Baseball	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	80
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◖	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⚡ESPN NBA 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●	87
⚡ESPN NBA Basketball	**ESPN Videogames**	●●●●●	**75**
⚡ESPN NFL Football	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◖	72
⚡ESPN NFL 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●	84

Money and fame often come before glory in the NFL, so why should you be treated any differently? Enter the following codes to grant yourself a million crib points and unlock all crib items. You can even enter a code to get all the milestones without ever stepping onto the field. Enter these case-sensitive codes as your VIP name to activate:



CHAMPIONS: RETURN TO ARMS

HOW TO GET THE BEST WEAPON IN THE GAME

If you've been to the Plane of Valor, you might recall seeing a sword embedded in a stone. And if you tried to pull it free, you would have seen a window saying that only a true champion could remove the sword. Want to be a true champion and get the best weapon in the game? Here's how.

First of all, you need to get the championship medallions in the medal rounds; each championship medallion unlocks a bonus level. In addition, the Pit of Ill Omen and Faydark have built-in bonus levels. In each of these bonus levels is a bloodstone. If you collect all the bloodstones, you will unlock a second bonus level in the Plane of Nightmares. Fight your way through that second bonus level, and you will be declared a true champion. After that, all you have to do is run back to the Plane of Valor and claim your rightful prize.

PLANE OF WAR

MEDAL ROUND **Blood Bath**

CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Use fewer than four potions to defeat all four horsemen**

If you want to tackle this one right away, then your best bet for limiting health potions is to get to a corner to avoid being trampled by the speeding horsemen; otherwise, they will knock you down every time. Alternately, just wait until you're further in the game and have leveled up—by then you're powerful enough to easily take out the horses and horsemen with ranged attacks before they can reach you.

PLANE OF INNOVATION

MEDAL ROUND **Tick Tock, Tick Tock**

CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Take out all eight clockworks before they reach the endpoints**

This round is pretty simple, although again, it helps if you have a range attack. The clockworks move slowly, and it's not hard to take them down; just use the minimap to keep an eye on where they are. The bonus level for this round is just a way to make a little cash by betting on fights, so you won't get a bloodstone here.

PLANE OF WATER

MEDAL ROUND **Depth Scurry**

CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Get all 10 pearls**

Depth Scurry is purely a trial-and-error process—no little tricks here, which is a shame, since it takes a long time to learn the map well enough to get all 10 pearls. Memorize where the air bubbles are, and just expect that you will die many, many times. If you wait till you reach a higher level, then the skeletons attacking you barely hurt, so you can run right by them and not waste precious air on fighting.

PLANE OF TORMENT

MEDAL ROUND **Soul Break**

CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Free all 20 souls**

Soul Break will also take a few deaths. To take out pesky enemies, line up the exploding barrels like you are planting mines, then lead your prey back to the trap. Typically, you can outrun big monsters, but beware the little guys: They are fast, hard to see, and can wear you down quickly if you don't stand and fight them. If you can completely clear all the enemies from a corner of cells, then you can also use that area as a recuperating spot—hide behind one of the doors in an empty cell until your health has fully recovered.

PLANE OF DISEASE

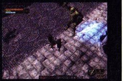
MEDAL ROUND **Frogville**

CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Squish 156 frogs**

Unlike the ghosts in *Pac-Man* (which Frogville was styled after), these kobold are impossible to outrun; use the minimap to avoid them as best as possible, but when you come up on a kobold, use R1 to block and then press L1 to retreat. You can't kill them, but you can get them to back away long enough to escape. Also be sure to step on every frog—sometimes they hop out of the direct line of stomping, so you may need to veer right and left to get them all.

PLANE OF VALOR

MEDAL ROUND **Warlord's Endless Honor**
CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Defeat at least eight warlords**
Potions don't count here, so stock up before you come in. And don't worry about making it more than eight rounds—beating more warlords than that doesn't count, so you can let yourself die once you've killed off eight. As far as battle tips, well, these guys are pretty easy. Don't waste time fighting the small guys, because they are continually replaced; instead, target your fire at the main boss while evading the henchmen. Once the big guy dies, the little ones disappear as well.



PLANE OF FIRE

MEDAL ROUND **Gnome Escort**
CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Keep five gnomes alive**
Try to keep all the gnomes within your sight at all times. The easiest way to corral them is by continually running from the back of the group to the front of the group, taking out any enemies you see on either end. You can let up to three gnomes die, so don't worry if a few stragglers don't make it.

PLANE OF STONE

MEDAL ROUND **Kobold Onslaught**
CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Keep all three carts intact for eight rounds**
Stay near the bottom of the enclosed area and continuously hold down the Fire button to keep your character in that one spot. Then just rotate your character in the direction you need to aim. If more than two kobolds reach a cart, it gets blown up, so aim for the crowds.

PLANE OF NIGHTMARES

MEDAL ROUND **Death's Countdown**
CHAMPIONSHIP MEDALLION **Kill at least 75 monsters**
This is a timed round—you have four minutes to charge forward and destroy as many monsters as possible. Aim for quick, effective killing—don't waste time trying to run away or play cat and mouse. It helps here to have plenty of potions handy.

PIT OF ILL OMEN

BONUS AREA **Gothic Castle**
HOW TO ACCESS **Defend all eight gnomes from sea monsters in the Gnome Village**
First off: Save at a checkpoint before you enter the Gnome Village portion of the level—if you fail to complete it on the first try, you won't be able to try it again unless you either exit the level and start it all over or load a previous save. The monsters tend to attack from alternating directions, so keep jumping back and forth. Make sure you keep the sea monsters' attention on you and not the gnomes by hitting them a few times before dealing with any other monsters. Your reward is a visit to the Gothic Castle, where a bloodstone awaits.

FAYDARK

BONUS AREA **Unexplored Tomb**
HOW TO ACCESS **Find the archaeologist shovel**
To find the archaeologist shovel, go to Kelethin—take the elevator there after killing off all the elves in the forest of Faydark. Afterward, go back to the forest and use the shovel to access the blocked tomb. If you have not gone far enough through the game to find the Words of Spiritual Harmony, you may have to adventure a little further and then return to Faydark to open up the second portion of the Unexplored Tomb. In this second portion, the bloodstone awaits.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
PhatBank	1 million crib points		
CribMax	Every crib item		
MadSkilz	Every milestone complete		
⚡ESPN NHL Hockey	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◐	73
⚡ESPN NHL 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◐	85
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◐	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online	●●◐	66
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online	●●●◐	77
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◐	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◐	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
EyeToy: AntiGrav	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	87
EyeToy: Groove	Sony CEA	●●●●◐	80
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◐	41
Fairly OddParents: Shadow Showdown	THQ	●●●◐	88
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	●●◐	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	●●●●	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◐	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◐	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**63**
⚡FIFA Soccer 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡FIFA Soccer 2005	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**86**
Fight Club	Vivendi Universal	●◐	87
⚡Fight Night 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●**	**80**
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◐	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**●●●●●**	**53**
Final Fantasy X-2	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Final Fantasy XI	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**78**
⚡Final Fantasy XI: Chains of Promathia	Square Enix USA	●●●●	87
Finding Nemo	**THQ**	**●●●◐**	**71**
Fireblade	Midway	●●◐	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	●●◐	76
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◐	53
Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone	Atari	●●●◐	86
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◐	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◐	72
Freedom Fighters	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**73**
Freekstyle	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●**	**59**
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◐	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◐	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	●●◐	76
Front Mission 4	Square Enix	●●●●	82
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	●	76
Fullmetal Alchemist	Square Enix	●●●	89
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◐	72
Future Tactics: The Uprising	Crave	●●●◐	81
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◐	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◐	50
Galactic Wrestling Featuring Ultimate Muscle	Bandai	●●◐	82
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◐	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gallop Racer 2004	Tecmo	●●●●	85
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◐	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	●●●●	66
The Getaway: Black Monday	Sony CEA	●●	89
Get on da Mic	Eidos	●●	87
Ghosthunter	Namco	●●◐	84

READER REVIEWS

THE FIRST WAVE OF SHOOTERS

KILLZONE

WHAT YOU SAID

"Many games these days are really pushing consoles to the limit. It's no surprise that *Killzone* falls into the crowd of hyped titles boasting graphical enhancements and juiced-up sounds. Throughout the game, trees pop up and fellow soldiers morph like clay. Speaking of soldiers, your comrades aren't exactly the brightest crayons in the box. Most of the time, Scooby-Doo and the gang sit there inhaling bullets like there's no tomorrow while you charge forward and take out the semi-intelligent Helghast soldiers. If that doesn't happen, they get stuck on a tree that hasn't even sprouted its first leaf, let alone appeared at all. But aside from its many bugs, *Killzone* does have its strong points. The sound and visuals shine, taking me back to *Medal of Honor: Frontline*. With all the bullets whizzing by and grenades exploding, it has to be one of the best-sounding games in the PS2 library.

"When it comes down to it, Killzone can be hit or miss. Give it a chance and you may find it enjoyable (to an extent)."

[●●●◖○]

Steve Burns
via e-mail

WHAT WE SAID

"If *Killzone*'s performance were as good as its looks, it easily could levy a serious blow against the *Halo 2* juggernaut. As it is, *Killzone* is no *Halo* killer, but it's easily the game that *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* should have been."

[●●●●○]

GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

WHAT YOU SAID

"Wow. Just...wow. Anyone who loved the first *GoldenEye* (which was everyone) most likely jumped at this one. Unknown to them, it was waiting to give them the biggest, most uncomfortable kick to the junk anyone has ever received. If you are expecting similar gameplay, you might be interested; otherwise, your stiff-as-a-board, flat character and his supermagic eyeball will just drive you away. Sure, it's cool to see through walls and stuff, but we want to play a *Bond* game, one packed with action and a compelling story! This sad excuse of a sequel has action, but it lacks a good story or anything else that was remotely cool in the original *GoldenEye*. Stay away."

[●◖○○○]

Mitchell Dyer
via e-mail

WHAT WE SAID

"Slick powers, moderately competent A.I., and amusing deathtraps can't save *Rogue Agent* from being bland, linear, and repetitive—it tends to give too much of the mediocre and not enough of the awesome."

[●●●○○]

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex	Bandai	●●	87
⚡Ghost Recon 2	Ubisoft	●●●	89
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◖	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◖	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	●●◖	76
GoDai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◖	54
Godzilla: Save the Earth	Atari	●●◖	88
⚡GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	EA Games	●●●	89

Before there were bullets, people shot each other with paintballs. It's an almost-historical fact. The following codes allow you to turn back the clock with paintball mode and unlock all the multiplayer skins. Now you and your friends can reenact your favorite historical battles…sort of. Enter these codes in the Extras menu:

PAINTBALL MODE Right, Left, Right, Left, Down, Down, Up, Up
UNLOCK ALL MULTIPLAYER SKINS Down, Left, Up, Left, Right, Down, Left, Up

Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◖	39
Gradius V	Konami	●●●◖	85
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**46**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◖	68
Grand Theft Auto III	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**52**
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**87**
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**63**
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◖	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◖	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◖	72
⚡Gretzky NHL 2005	Sony CEA	●●◖	88
⚡Growlanser Generations	Working Designs	●●●●	88
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◖	58
Guilty Gear Isuka	Sammy	●●●●	86
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◖	61
Gungrave: Overdose	Mastiff	●●●◖	86
GunGriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◖	39
The Guy Game	Gathering	●	85
Half-Life	**Sierra**	●●●●●	**51**
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	**EA Games**	●●●	**75**
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●◖	76
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●◖	64
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	EA Games	●●●●	82
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	●●●	77
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◖	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Headhunter: Redemption	Sega	●●●	86
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◖	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	●●●●●	**67**
Hitman: Contracts	Eidos	●●●●◖	81
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	**Eidos**	●●●●◖	**63**
The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**55**
⚡Hot Shots Golf Fore!	Sony CEA	●●●◖	85
⚡Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	THQ	●●●◖	89
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	●●◖	64
The Hulk	**Vivendi Universal**	●●●●	**70**
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	●●◖	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	●●◖	67
I-Ninja	Namco	●●●◖	75
Ico	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**50**
The Incredibles	THQ	●●●◖	88
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	●●●	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	●●●	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	●●●◖	77
Inuyasha: The Secret of the Cursed Mask	Bandai	●	89
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	●●●◖	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	●●	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53

COLOR US BAD

When we reviewed the wonderfully unique *Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color*—a nifty monster-creating/raising/fighting game that rendered doodles in 3D—we created 3D caricatures of our whole staff from the awesome tools within the game.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**52**
Jak II	**Sony CEA**	●●●◖	**74**
Jak 3	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	87
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	**EA Games**	●●●●	**52**
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	EA Games	●●●●◖	79
James Bond 007: NightFire	**Activision**	●●●●◖	**64**
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	●●	65
Jeopardy!	Atari	●●◖	77
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	●	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	●●	63
Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies	THQ	●●●	88
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	●◖	54
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death	Evolved Games	●●◖	80
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	●●●	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	●●●●◖	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	●●	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	●●●●	75
Karaoke Revolution Volume 2	Konami	●●●●◖	83
Karaoke Revolution Volume 3	Konami	●●●●◖	87
Katamari Damacy	Namco	●●●●◖	86
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	●●●◖	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	●●●	42
Kessen	EA Games	●●●	39
Kessen II	Koei	●●●	51
kill.switch	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**75**
⚡Killzone	Sony CEA	●●●●	87
Kinetica	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	50
King Arthur	Konami	●	88
King of Fighters 2000/2001	SNK Playmore	●●◖	76
King of Fighters 2002/2003	SNK Playmore	●●●●	88
King of Fighters: Maximum Impact	SNK Playmore	●●●	87
The King of Route 66	Sega	●●●	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	●●	55
Kingdom Hearts	**Square EA**	●●●●◖	**61**
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	●●●●◖	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Kuon	Agetec	●●◖	87
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	●●◖	76
La Pucelle: Tactics	Mastiff	●●●●	81
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	●●◖	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	●●◖	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	●●●	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	●◖	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●●◖	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	●●●	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	●●●	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	●●◖	51
Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	87
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	Activision	●●	89
Lethal Skies	Sammy	●●●	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	●●●◖	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	●	76
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	●●●◖	63
⚡**The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King**	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**75**
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	EA Games	●●	88
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	**EA Games**	●●●●◖	**63**
Lowrider	Jaleco	●◖	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	●●●◖	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	●●	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	●●●	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●◖	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
⚡**Madden NFL 2003**	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡**Madden NFL 2004**	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**72**
⚡Madden NFL 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	83

All of you Giants and Packers fans out there will love the following cheats for *Madden NFL 2005*. Enter these codes to play as the '86 Giants and '66 Packers. The Chiefs are also in need of a cheat—use the provided code to add some spirit with a Chiefs cheerleader. To enter these case-sensitive codes, go to My Madden, select Madden Cards, then select Madden Codes.

CHIEFS CHEERLEADER	T46M6T
GIANTS PUMP UP CROWD	L13Z9J
PACKERS PUMP UP CROWD	K26Y4V
'86 GIANTS TEAM	K44F2Y
'66 PACKERS TEAM	G49P7W

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Mafia	Gathering	●●●◖	79
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
Malice	Mud Duck	●●◖	84
Manhunt	**Rockstar**	●●●◖	**76**
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	**Rockstar**	●●●●	**53**
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●◖	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	**Capcom**	●●●◖	**54**
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	●●●●	77
McFarlane's Evil Prophecy	Konami	◖	84
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◖	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**58**
⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	**EA Games**	●●●◖	**76**
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●●◖	83
Mega Man X: Command Mission	Capcom	●●●◖	86
Mega Man X7	Capcom	●●●◖	74
Mega Man X8	Capcom	●●●	88
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◖	60
Mercenaries	LucasArts	●●●●◖	89

Blowing up things is the right of any mercenary, but limited ammo and health is the leading cause of premature demolition dysfunction. Not to worry, however; with the following codes, you'll be up all night long with the ammunition and health you need to keep the explosions coming. If you are into a little role-playing, there are codes for playing as Han Solo or Indiana Jones, as well as a code for filling your pockets with cash. Enter these codes in the PDA factions mode:

EARN $1,000,000 Right, Down, Left, Up, Up, Left, Down, Right
PLAY AS HAN SOLO Left, Left, Right, Right, Up, Down, Up, Up [Note: Must have 110 blueprint bounties first]
INFINITE AMMO Right, Left, Right, Right, Left, Right, Left, Left
INFINITE HEALTH Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right
PLAY AS INDIANA JONES Left, Left, Right, Right, Up, Up, Down, Down [Note: Must have 20 national treasure bounties first]

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	**Konami**	●●●●●	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	**Konami**	●●●●●	**88**

While they won't help you through the game, the following secrets for *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* allow you to play around with the intro effects. Press the different buttons to control colors, symbols, and even get the singer to whisper "Snake eater." Have some fun with the intro movie by pressing the following buttons for different effects.

R3 Changes the symbols.
ROTATE THE LEFT ANALOG STICK Credits will make waves as they move across the screen.
ANY D-PAD BUTTON Circles come up onscreen.
R1 Singer whispers "Snake eater."
ROTATE THE RIGHT ANALOG STICK Different symbols appear onscreen.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	●●●●	**39**
⚡Midnight Club II	**Rockstar**	●●●●●	**67**
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	●●●◖	76
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	Midway	●●●●	87
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◖	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	●●	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◖	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
⚡MLB 2005	Sony CEA	●●●◖	80
MLB SlugFest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB SlugFest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67
⚡MLB SlugFest: Loaded	Midway	●●●◖	83
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◖	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◖	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◖	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	●●◖	77
Monster Hunter	Capcom	●●●●	86
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◖	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◖	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	**Midway**	●●●●	**64**
⚡Mortal Kombat: Deception	Midway	●●●●	87
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP2	Namco	●●●●◖	53
MotoGP3	Namco	●●●●◖	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
MTV Music Generator 3: This Is the Remix	Codemasters	●●●◖	82
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	●◖	76
⚡MTX: Mototrax	Activision	●●◖	80
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◖	52
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	67
⚡MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	80
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◖	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◖	59
⚡My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◖	64
MX Unleashed	**THQ**	●●●	**79**
Namco Museum	**Namco**	●●●◖	**53**
Nano Breaker	Konami	●●◖	90
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◖	40
⚡NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**85**
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	62
⚡NASCAR Thunder 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◖	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**53**
⚡NBA 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**63**
NBA Ballers	Midway Sports	●●●●	80
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◖	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◖	51
⚡NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	63
⚡NBA Live 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	75
⚡NBA Live 2005	EA Sports	●●●●	86

Want to out-jump the best that the NBA has to offer? Unlimited air is just a code entry away. While you're at it, enter codes to unlock 50,000 dynasty points and all classic hardwood jerseys. Enter the following codes at the "NBA Live Codes" menu:

YISS55CZ0E	50,000 dynasty points
XVLJD9895	Unlimited air
PRYI234N0B	All classic hardwood jerseys

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●	63
⚡NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	●●◖	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**47**
NBA Street Vol. 2	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**68**
⚡NBA Street V3	EA Sports Big	●●●●◖	90

There are many unlockables in *NBA Street V3*, including the Beastie Boys team. The following explains how to unlock some of the game's top players. All items and players must be earned or bought with Street points.

THE BEASTIE BOYS (TEAM) Win the 5 Boroughs tournament or spend 500 Street points.
BIGGIE LITTLES Win either the Biggie Littles Is Back or Doing Big Things tournament or spend 1,000 Street points.
DIME Win either the Can You Spare a Dime or Dropped by Dime tournament or spend 1,500 Street points.
BONAFIDE Win either the Certified Bonafide or Undisputed tournament or spend 3,000 Street points.
STRETCH Win either the Respect Your Elders or Still Reigning tournament or spend 4,000 Street points.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	64

NOLFCOPTER

It's a shame that the PS2 port of *No One Lives Forever* was so lackluster. The game was almost universally acclaimed on PC and won a number of awards for FPS innovation the year it came out. At least the humor carried over fairly well to consoles.

PRINCELY RUMORS

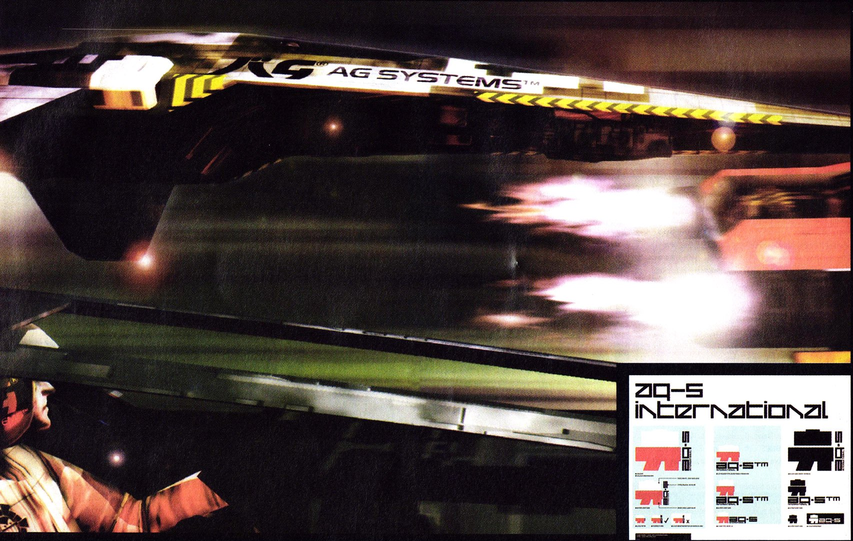
The word on the street right now is that the next *Prince of Persia* game will return to the more lighthearted tone of *The Sands of Time*. We certainly hope so; the forced "mature" theme of *Warrior Within* was without question the game's biggest flaw.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	●●◖	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	●	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	64
⚡NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	●●	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
NCAA Football 2003	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡NCAA Football 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**71**
⚡NCAA Football 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	83
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	●◖	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	●●	61
⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	●●●	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	●●●	64
⚡NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	76
⚡NCAA March Madness 2005	EA Sports	●●●◖	88
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**62**
⚡Need for Speed Underground	**EA Games**	●●●●◖	**76**
⚡Need for Speed Underground 2	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**87**
Neo Contra	Konami	●●●◖	87
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●◖	**52**
⚡NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	●●●◖	60
⚡NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	●●●	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	●	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	53
⚡NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	61
⚡NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	●●◖	50
⚡NFL Street	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●◖	**78**
⚡NFL Street 2	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	89

Bringing the game to the streets can only mean that NFL rules no longer apply. Enter the following cheats to change the way the game plays by eliminating first downs and fumbles. There are also Reebok and Xzibit teams for your playing pleasure, as well as a custom EA Field. All codes are case sensitive and must be entered in the Cheat menu.

NO FIRST DOWNS	NoChains
NO FUMBLES	GlueHands
TEAM REEBOK	Reebok
UNLOCK EA FIELD	EAField
TEAM XZIBIT	TeamXzibit

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NHL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	63
⚡NHL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	73
⚡NHL 2005	EA Sports	●●●◖	85
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●◖	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	●●	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	●●●●◖	62
⚡NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	●●●●	73
Nick Toons: Movin'	THQ	●●●	88
Nightmare of Druaga	Namco	●●	87
Ninja Assault	Namco	●●◖	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	●●●◖	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	●●●	51
Oni	Rockstar	●◖	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	●●●●	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	**Capcom**	●●●●	**60**
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	Capcom	●●●●◖	81
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	●●●	39
⚡Outlaw Golf 2	Global Star	●◖	88
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	●●	60
Pac-Man World 2	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**54**
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●◖	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	●●	53
Phantom Brave	NIS America	●●●●◖	85
Pinball Hall of Fame	Crave	●◖	90
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	●●●◖	55
Pitfall: The Lost Expedition	Activision	●●	80
The Polar Express	THQ	●●●	88
Pool Paradise	Ignition	●●●◖	83
Portal Runner	3DO	●●	50



BEHIND THE GAME: WIPEOUT

THE MAKING OF AN EARLY PS1 CLASSIC—ONE THAT'S READY TO RETURN ON PSP

Few titles in the history of videogames have matched the cultural significance of Psygnosis' *Wipeout*. Fans refer to the game with a reverence normally reserved for more traditional remnants of videogame lore—the *Mario*s, *Zelda*s, and *Zork*s of the world. Culturally, technically, and artistically, *Wipeout* set the tone for an entire generation of games and marketing plans. It unexpectedly became the tragically hip poster child not only for the original PlayStation, but also for a cultural movement that has since garnered many names: the E generation, rave culture, et cetera, et cetera. Its sensibilities have spilled over into nearly everything with a "cyber," "techno," or "future" in its title since 1999. And to this day it remains videogames' cultural ambassador No. 1.

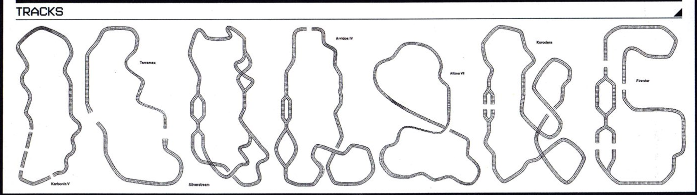
Based loosely on a concept by Jim Bowers (then a designer at Psygnosis), the game's original form was a title called *Matrix Marauders*, as *Wipeout* Lead Designer Nick Burcombe recalls. "On paper, [Jim's game] was a complex design whereby futuristic craft flew around a grid blasting each other—hit points and strategy were the order of the day. The game was written by a third party, and it was eventually forced out the door and was a huge letdown. But the ship designs were great—they were a shape and design principle that was later to resurface in the guise of a *Wipeout* ship. I was in the throes of finishing *Mario Kart* at that time and had found it to be possibly the greatest game I'd ever played." One thing led to another—and then, as is often the case, they led to the bar.

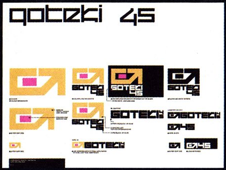
Burcombe explains: "Jimmy [and I] sat in the Shrewsbury Arms pub one night discussing the idea, and in the best tradition of drinking too much and talking too fast, the name *Wipeout* came out. It was punchy and kind of surfy/floaty, and we thought it was cool as hell. The conversation turned to the music, and Jim and I were enjoying the Prodigy at the time. We joked about getting the Prodigy to do an up-to-date remix of the Surfaris' classic surf ditty 'Wipe Out.' We simply pictured Liam Howlett (lead singer of the Prodigy) being right in your face screaming, 'Heheheheheheee, wipe ooooout!' and then it kicking off at 140 [beats per minute] with some awesome hardcore. It was such an ace moment—it stuck. And when Jim got into the office and declared that [the game] was now called *Wipeout*, nobody argued. Some people thought it was odd and [that it] said nothing about the game—but then after living with it for about a minute and a half, they got it. It just worked."

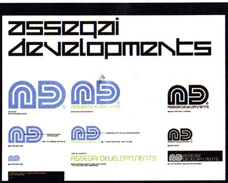
VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES

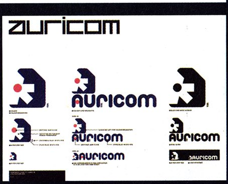
Of *Wipeout*'s many advances, one that stood out for many was the incorporation of progressive graphic-design outfit The Designers Republic into the project. "The plan was to get them in to do a treatment on the logo and packaging," explains *Wipeout* Art Director Lee Carus, recalling the genesis of the relationship. "But on one of those dark late nights when I was creating the intro sequence, I noticed a fax from TDR lying on someone's desk. I thought to myself, 'That fax header is cool.' [So] I scanned in the header, tidied it up a bit, and mapped it over the texture on the side of one of the *Wipeout* ships. I thought it worked really well—so did [the marketing department] and so did TDR. Their involvement escalated from that point, and they ended up creating logos and artwork for in-game purposes. If you load up the intro sequence of the finished game, you can

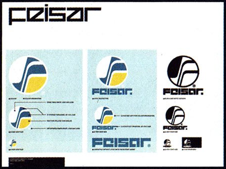
TRACKS

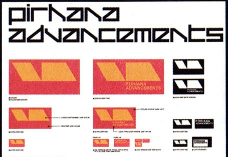


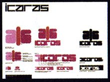


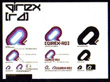












FASHION FORWARD

The designs of *Wipeout*'s race-team logos are stark, surreal expressions of The Designers Republic's aesthetic. This style absolutely permeated the game, and you'll be able to see an updated version in *Wipeout Pure*.

see the fax header on the ship in all its glory."

Unlike so many of today's games, in which in-game advertising pulls gamers out of their experience through the sudden shock of everyday marketing ("Honey, there's a Mountain Dew ad in my *Dungeons & Dragons*!"), even TDR's billboards actually served a sense of purpose. The innovative designs implied and helped contribute to the game's futuristic milieu, actually adding to the game's immersive setting rather than taking away from it. TDR's Ian Anderson has fond memories of the project, describing the working relationship as "very positive, trusting, and therefore creative and mutually beneficial. The only direction Nick Burcombe really gave us on the in-game design was to keep it TDR, or be more TDR. Nick had a clear vision for what he wanted and was confident enough in his own skills and talent to know that TDR could realize the graphic element of his vision better than he could himself. It was refreshing to have ideas rather than egos flying around."

Wipeout Brand Manager Susan Campbell echoes these sentiments, adding that the connection between TDR and Psygnosis was "natural and symbiotic, very much a partnership. They recognized how unique the game was and the significance it could have on the industry."

TREND SETTERS

And significance it had. Psygnosis had essentially struck cultural gold: TDR's style fit the game perfectly and helped propel its acceptance beyond the hardcore gamer to include design-savvy trendsetters, particularly in the United Kingdom. *Wipeout* became a staple at dance clubs around Europe—particularly in "chill-out" or "comedown" rooms—also due in large part to the game's soundtrack (see sidebar). And yet the notion of design in games still hasn't caught on the way some might have expected.

"I still don't think there is enough style in many games out there. Some developers have tried to take a stylistic approach and haven't been bold enough to create a truly unique stylistic vision," says Carus. "If you're going to do it, commit yourself to it. Go out into the world beyond games and get a feel for what's cool—or rather what's going to be cool—out there, and find the right people to do it. I've been in too many situations where key aspects of the stylistic vision of a game have been handed off to an artist on the team because he/she knows a good website for free fonts and isn't really that busy right now!"

Anderson agrees but is anxious to get involved again: "We'd love to work with people on projects on the same scale as *Wipeout*. We've been in discussions with various game companies in recent months, actively seeking out the right kinds of projects to get involved in. There's been a major shift in the nature of the industry since *Wipeout*. Now the majors are more corporate, and I'm not sure they're looking for an ideas company such as TDR to come in and get so involved in a project, although there seem to be a lot of developers looking for ways to create a 'punk/indie' subgenre for creative gaming as an antidote to movie tie-ins, et cetera. I really hope we can find partners in the near future who are looking to inject something more cultural and artistic into games—I'm sure there are people out there...." « *Evan Shamoon*

MUSIC HAS THE RIGHT TO CHILDREN

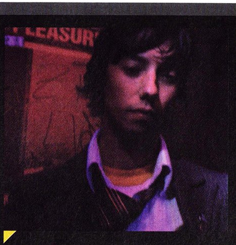
While it might seem mundane today, *Wipeout* was the first game ever to use licensed music as an in-game soundtrack—another link directly to the heart of pop culture. "At the time, I didn't feel like this was any great achievement," recalls Nick Burcombe. "We had a CD and a CD player, and we weren't streaming data off the disc, so the disc sat there doing nothing—it made sense to play CD-quality music. It's only in retrospect that I suppose that it was a big leap for the industry."

Burcombe continues: "Right from the start—talking about the Prodigy and the like—it was clear that [*Wipeout*] was going to have the music that I loved at the time. I'd been into the dance-music scene since 1989, and prior to that, my mates from school [and I] had been listening to the break-dance stuff and early hip-hop. This was much to the annoyance of some of my older colleagues who dismissed dance music as being 'nothing but a fad' and 'too repetitive.' But for *Wipeout* there couldn't have been any other type of music."

The soundtrack still stands as one of the finest in videogame history, despite Burcombe's inability to convince the marketing department to go for some of his favorite bands at the time. "Obviously, with most of these names being unknowns—they were of little appeal to marketing for spending money on. But they came back with Orbital (Sony). I [actually] went to London to meet Paul and Phil Hartnoll once—I took them through it, and they thought it was pretty cool, and so they got involved and wrote 'PETROL.'" And the rest was history.

THE SPORTS GUY

GRASS ISN'T GREENER THAN MONEY



TODD ZUNIGA
is a former *OPM* staffer turned freelance writer. If you have a question about sports games, want a prediction, or just disagree, mail him at thesportsguy@ziffdavis.com.

Rumors are swirling, megadeals are being signed left and right, and the Mets are overpaying for everyone! These last few months have been like a gaming off-season equipped with its very own hot stove. It wasn't long ago—was it?—when I got to prattle on endlessly in this sizable box about the joys and failings of sports games. But in recent months, sports gaming (like sports in general) has publicly made a show of the fact that it's all about the green. This is no secret, of course—it's America. But now this industry's biggest cash cow has brought its financial aspirations to the forefront. I miss my sweet naivety!

Consider my reaction to last month's news that EA and the NFL had signed an exclusivity deal. I was, in my own words, "shocked." What a baby industry this is, especially in terms of sports, for me to have such a reaction. After the shock passed (and my last column indicting the deal was well on its way to print), a more interesting thing occurred to me: What if EA had lost out on the NFL license? Imagine a world without *Madden*. Now that would've been odd. Definitely pigskin for thought.

But enough contract talk! It's now time for me to declare *Winning Eleven 8* as the Sports Game of the Year in 2005. I realize two things as I write this: 1) *Madden*'s not out yet, and 2) this year's *Madden* is going to be the best *Madden* ever made, in part to hush the naysayers (aka me) anxious about the EA/NFL deal. But much in the way Tony Hawk's franchise made me buy a pair of Globe skate shoes and bust my hip on a half-pipe, the *Winning Eleven* franchise is so good that it has me caring about seemingly fictional men named Obafemi Martins, Eidur Gudjohnsen, and Didier Drogba. If you like *FIFA Soccer 2005* (God save you), dump it at the nearest EB and snare *WE8*. If you don't absolutely love it, then it's likely you have scurvy.

I left *OPM* years ago to work on *NBA Street V3*. I left that project after seven months, before it was anywhere near its finished state, but since I was on the project and can't review it, first a few positive points: *V3* is the best-looking game on the PS2. The courts are perfectly lit, perfectly perfect, and the intro video is enough to make me believe I could get my name magically scribbled in midair. The audio is unrivaled. A few negative points: If these courts are authentic, why does the three-point line at The Cage go all the way around? It should stop at the elbows. If the game is so dunk skewed, why isn't there a dedicated Dunk button to save me from 2-foot jump shots? I hate that I end up making a dunker out of my baller against my will just so I can compete in the dunk contests. Finally, where's the one-on-one? *GTA: San Andreas* has every genre under the sun, but *V3* doesn't even fully trump its main competition, Midway's *Ballers*? Until then, *V3*'s still in this stratosphere. But criticisms aside, imagine some young buck getting to virtually ball at a spot-on replica of his home court. I'm getting the chills!

Next month, if EA or Take-Two doesn't sign me to a seven-year contract, it's all baseball (finally!) and PSP (yes!). I'll do my best to keep the Wall Street talk to a minimum. «

> WHAT A BABY INDUSTRY THIS IS, FOR ME TO HAVE SUCH A REACTION.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Power Drome	Mud Duck	●	84
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	THQ	●●	88
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	●●	65
Pride FC	THQ	●●●●	65
Primal	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**75**
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	Ubisoft	●●●●	88
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	●●●●◖	65
Project Eden	Eidos	●●●◖	52
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	60
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	Midway	●●●●◖	82
P.T.O. IV	Koei	●●●	66
Punisher	THQ	●●●◖	90
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	●●●◖	40
Quake III: Revolution	EA Games	●●●●◖	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	●●●●	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	●●●●	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	●●●	64
Rapala Pro Fishing	Activision	●●◖	85
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
⚡Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**87**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	●●●◖	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	●●●◖	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	●●◖	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	●●●◖	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	●●●	57
Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar	●●●●	82
Red Faction	**THQ**	●●●●●	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	●●●●	63
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	●●●●	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	●●●◖	63
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	●●●●◖	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	●●●◖	70
Resident Evil Outbreak	Capcom	●●●◖	81
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	●●●◖	71
Rez	Sega	●●●●◖	53
Ribbit King	Bandai	●●●	82
Ridge Racer V	Namco	●●●●◖	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	●●●◖	61
Ring of Red	Konami	●●●●	43
Rise to Honor	**Sony CEA**	●●●	**78**
⚡Risk: Global Domination	Atari	●●●●	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	●●●	62
Road Kill	Midway	●●●●	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	●●●●	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	●●◖	74
Robotech: Invasion	Global Star	●●●	86
Rocky	Ubisoft	●●●●	64
Rocky Legends	Ubisoft	●●◖	87
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	●●●●	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	●●●◖	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	●●◖	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	●●◖	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	●●●	73
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	●●●◖	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	●●	71
Rugby	EA Sports	●●●◖	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	●●●	73
Rumble Racing	EA Games	●●●●◖	45
Rumble Roses	Konami	●●●	88
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take-Two	●●◖	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	●●●●◖	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	●●◖	55
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	Sega	●●●●	80
Samurai Warriors	Koei/EA	●●●●	81
Samurai Warriors: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●	88
Saturday Night Speedway	Atari	●●◖	81
Savage Skies	Bam	●●●	56
Scaler	Global Star	●●●●	88
Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ	●●●	81
Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	**THQ**	●●●	**58**
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	●●	62
SD Gundam Force: Showdown!	Bandai	●●●◖	88
Second Sight	Codemasters	●●●●	86
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	●●●●	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	●●●◖	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	●●●	62
Sega Classics Collection	Sega	●●	90
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	●●	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
Sega Superstars	Sega	●●●●	88
⚡Serious Sam: Next Encounter	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	●●	80
Shadow Hearts	Midway	●●●●	52
Shadow Hearts: Covenant	Midway	●●●●	86
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	●●●◖	43
Shadow of Rome	Capcom	●●●●	89
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	●●	57
Shaman King: Power of Spirit	Konami	●●◖	89
Shark Tale	Activision	●●◖	88
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	●●◖	52
ShellShock: Nam '67	Eidos	●●	85
Shifters	3DO	●	58
Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne	Atlus	●●●●◖	86
Shining Tears	Sega	●●●	90
Shinobi	Sega	●●●◖	63
Showdown: Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●◖	83
Shox	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	63
Shrek 2	Activision	●●●◖	82

FORGOTTEN GEM
Remember *Robot Alchemic Drive*? This innovative giant-fighting-robots game featured one of the most interesting control schemes on the PS2, with each button on each side of the controller manipulating a specific part of your robot's anatomy.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	64
Siren	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	●●●●◖	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	●●●●◖	71
Silent Hill 4: The Room	Konami	●●●●◖	85
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	●●●◖	70
Silent Scope	Konami	●●●	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	●●●◖	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	●●●◖	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	●●●◖	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	●●●	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	●◖	64
The Sims	EA Games	●●●●	65
⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA Games	●●●●◖	76
Sitting Ducks	Hip Interactive	●●●	88
Sky Gunner	Atlus	●●●◖	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	●●●	40
Sled Storm	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**62**
Sly 2: Band of Thieves	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**86**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	●●●◖	71
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament	Namco	●●●◖	56
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament 2	Namco	●●●●	82
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	●●●●◖	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	●●●●◖	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	●●	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	●●●◖	59
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	●●●	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	●●	77
Sonic Mega Collection	Sega	●●●	88
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	●●●●●	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	●●●	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	●●●◖	75
Space Race	Infogrames	●●◖	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	●◖	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	●●●●	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	●●●◖	75
Spider-Man	**Activision**	●●●●◖	**57**
Spider-Man 2	Activision	●●●◖	84
Splashdown	Infogrames	●●●●	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	●●●●●	**72**
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	●●●●◖	75
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie	THQ	●●●●◖	87
Spy Fiction	Sammy	●●	85
SpyHunter	**Midway**	●●●●◖	**50**
SpyHunter 2	Midway	●●●	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	**Vivendi Universal**	●●●	**64**
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	Vivendi Universal	●●	87
⚡SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Namco	●●●	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**52**
⚡SSX 3	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**74**
Star Ocean: Till the End of Time	Square Enix	●●●●	84
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	●●	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	●●◖	53
Star Wars Battlefront	LucasArts	●●●●◖	86

OPM leads to codes. Codes lead to cheating. Cheating leads to the dark side. Do not use this code to unlock all planets. Go to the Planet Selection screen and enter Square, Circle, Square, Circle.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	**LucasArts**	●●●	**64**
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	●●●	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	●●	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●◖	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	●●●●◖	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	●●●●◖	**43**
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	●●	74
State of Emergency	**Rockstar**	●●●	**55**
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	●●◖	59
Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●●●	84
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	●●●◖	39
Street Hoops	**Activision**	●●●◖	**60**
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	●●●◖	47
Strike Force Bowling	Crave	●◖	82

LOST IN TIME

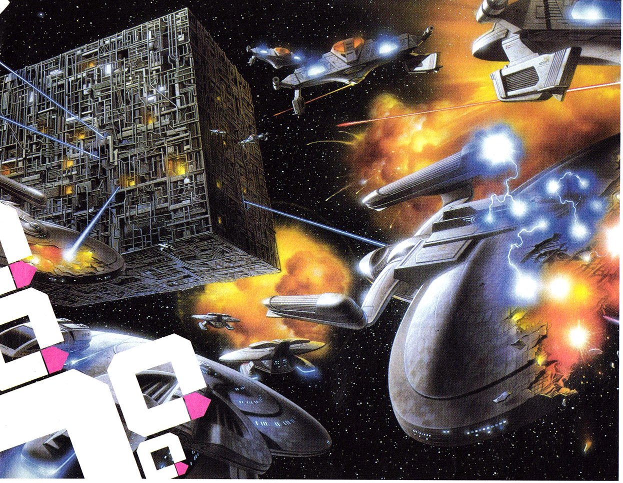
Swing Away Golf was one of the first games released on PS2. It was more or less a direct knockoff of *Hot Shots Golf*. A couple years later, developer T&E Soft managed to redeem itself with the much more entertaining *Disney Golf*.

WATERWORLD

The first *Splashdown* struck critics down in unadulterated shock with its unmatched water effects. Interestingly, its sequel, *Rides Gone Wild*, eschewed that hyperrealistic approach in favor of a much more cartoony—and much more fun—style.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Stuntman	**Infogrames/Atari**	●●●	**59**
Sub Rebellion	Metro3D	●●●●	62
The Suffering	Midway	●●●	80
Suikoden III	Konami	●●●	63
Suikoden IV	Konami	●●●	89
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	●●●◖	72
Summoner	THQ	●●●	39
Summoner 2	THQ	●●●◖	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	●●●◖	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	●●●	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	●◖	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	●●◖	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	●●●◖	63
Surfing H30	Rockstar	●●	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	●●●	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	●●●	38
⚡Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Taiko: Drum Master	Namco	●●●●	87
Tak and the Power of Juju	**THQ**	●●●◖	**75**
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	THQ	●●●◖	88
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	●●●◖	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	●●●◖	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	●●◖	75
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2	Konami	●	86
Tekken 4	**Namco**	●●●◖	**61**
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**39**
Technic Beat	Mastiff	●●●	89
Tenchu: Fatal Shadows	Sega	●●	90
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	●●●	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	●●◖	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	●◖	77
Terminator 3: The Redemption	Atari	●●●◖	86
Test Drive	**Infogrames**	●●●◖	**58**
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	●●●	48
Test Drive: Eve of Destruction	Atari	●●●●	85
Tetris Worlds	THQ	●●	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	●●●●	41
The Thing	Universal	●●●	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	●◖	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	63
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	86
Time Crisis 2	Namco	●●●●	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	●●●●◖	74
Time Crisis: Crisis Zone	Namco	●●●◖	86
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**63**
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	●●●●	86
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	●●	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	●●◖	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	●●●◖	65
⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	**Ubisoft**	●●●◖	**78**
⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	●●●●	80
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	68
⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**82**
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	**Eidos**	●●	**72**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	●●●●●	**51**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	●●●●●	**63**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	**Activision**	●●●●●	**76**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground 2	Activision	●●●●◖	87
Top Angler	Xicat	●●●◖	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	●●●◖	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	●●●	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	●	66
Transformers	Atari	●●●◖	81
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	●●●◖	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	●●●◖	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	●●	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●	45
⚡Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged	Atari	●●	81
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	**Activision**	●●	**76**
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	●●●	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	●◖	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**47**
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony CEA	●●●●	61

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	●●●	62
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	EA Games	●●●●	88
UEFA Euro 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	82
UFC Throwdown	Crave	●●●◖	58
UFC Sudden Impact	Crave	●●●◖	82
Under the Skin	Capcom	●●●◖	86
Unison	Tecmo	●●●◖	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	●●	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	●●◖	40
The Urbz: Sims in the City	EA Games	●●●◖	88
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	●●●●◖	64
Vampire Night	Namco	●●◖	52
Van Helsing	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	82
Vexx	Acclaim	●●	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	●●●◖	51
⚡Vietcong: Purple Haze	Global Star	●◖	88
Viewtiful Joe	Capcom	●●●●◖	85
Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom	●●●●	88
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	●●●●●	**55**
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	**Sega**	●●●●●	**72**
Virtua Quest	Sega	●●	89
Virtual on Marz	Sega	●●	76
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	●●●●◖	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	●●●	74
War Jetz	3DO	●●◖	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**64**
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	●●◖	74
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	●●◖	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	●◖	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	●●●◖	59
Way of the Samurai 2	Capcom	●●●	82
Wheel of Fortune	Atari	●●◖	76
Whiplash	Eidos	●●●◖	76
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	●●	63
Whiteout	Konami	●	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	●●●◖	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	●●●	39
Winback	Koei	●●●●	43
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	●●●●◖	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	●●●	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	DreamCatcher	●●●	57
⚡World Championship Poker	Crave	●◖	90
⚡World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco	●●●◖	76
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	●●●	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	●●●●	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**78**
⚡World Soccer: Winning Eleven 8 Int'l	Konami	●●●●◖	90
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	●●●●	65
⚡World Tour Soccer 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	80
Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	●◖	78
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	●●●●●	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	●●	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	●	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	●●◖	68
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	**THQ**	●●●◖	**76**
WWE SmackDown! Just Bring It	**THQ**	●●●◖	**52**
WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth	**THQ**	●●◖	**64**
⚡WWE SmackDown! vs. Raw	THQ	●●●◖	88
X Squad	EA Games	●●●◖	38
The X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	81
X-Men Legends	Activision	●●●●	87
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	●●●	64
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	●●●	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—DWZM	Namco	●●●●	66
Xenosaga: Episode II—JVGUB	Namco	●●●◖	90
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	●●●●◖	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	●●●◖	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	●●●◖	49
Ys VI: The Art of Napishtim	Konami	●●●◖	90
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	●●◖	67
Yu-Gi-Oh! Capsule Monster Coliseum	Konami	●●●	88
Yu Yu Hakusho: Dark Tournament	Atari	●●◖	88
Zapper	Infogrames	●●◖	64
ZOE: Zone of the Enders	Konami	●●●●◖	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	●●●●◖	68



REWIND

FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
STAR TREK Invasion
Assimilation Has Never Been So Much Fun!
GAMING ON
$9.99 PS GAMES
HAS LARA CROFT
FEAR EFFECT
THE FUTURE OF
FINAL FANTASY 9, 10, 11

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Meanwhile, in the world beyond games:

Microsoft was convicted of violating antitrust laws, Ben & Jerry's sold out to the company that makes Q-tips, the dot-com stock bubble burst in spectacular fashion, and satellite photos of Area 51 were posted on the Internet for the first time. Where were you?

MAKE IT SO

With the PS2 just weeks away and the PS1 really hitting its stride, there was lots of interesting coverage in April of 2000. Our cover story was *Star Trek: Invasion*, but that was just the tip of the iceberg. Iceberg? Spaceberg? Ehhh, whatever.

PREPARE TO BE ASSIMILATED

April's cover story was one of the more memorable of *OPM's* run, not because of its content, but because of the research that went into it: We got to visit the set of *Star Trek: Voyager* to see firsthand how seriously the *Star Trek* universe is treated. After walking the decks of the *Voyager* and climbing around in the Jefferies tubes, we even got to chat with Michael "Worf" Dorn—who was as reticent as his Klingon character.

THREE-WAY FANTASY

In April of 2000, Square had just announced the next three games in the *Final Fantasy* series. *IX* surprised us with its return to the old-school *FF* vibe, but *X* and *XI* really stole the show. At the time, *FFX* was supposed to interface with Square's PlayOnline service to provide online strategies—which never came to pass as a result of the delayed launch of the PS2's online service. *FFXI*, on the other hand, turned out even better than we were expecting.

REVIEWS HIGHLIGHTS

This was a damn impressive month for reviews. We had five games tied for top of the heap: *Fear Effect, WWF SmackDown!, Front Mission 3, Colony Wars: Red Sun*, and *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* all earned four-and-a-half discs each, with three more games earning four discs.

REVIEWS LOWLIGHTS

Continuing the surprisingly solid theme of this issue, there were very few games that really stunk up the joint in our April reviews lineup. The worst of the bunch was *BattleTanx: Global Assault*, with a not completely horrible one-and-a-half discs.

DEMO MADNESS

It was another strong month for demos, with our first glimpse of *Spider-Man*, an extensive playable of *Colony Wars: Red Sun*, the surprisingly cool *Eagle One: Harrier Attack*, and *Hot Shots Golf 2*. Lots of good playtime was had by all.

CHART TOPPERS

Gran Turismo 2 successfully defended its position at the top of the charts in April 2000, with the original *Gran Turismo* sneaking up to No. 3 due to gamers' renewed interest in the franchise. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* inched up another slot to No. 2, and *Spyro the Dragon* continued to dominate its sequel, climbing up yet another spot to No. 4. Rounding out the top five was *Dukes of Hazzard*. Wait, what? Er...the less said about that, the better. «

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Buongiorno Vitaminic	www.dirtyhippo.com	75
Capcom USA, Inc.	www.capcom.com	107, 148
Collins College/Career Education Corp.	www.collinscollege.edu	143
Eidos Interactive, Inc.	www.eidos.com	10-11
Electronic Arts	www.ea.com	17, 18-19, 20
Electronic Entertainment Expo	www.E3expo.com	131
Full Sail Real World Education	www.fullsail.com	137
Future Tec, Inc.	www.sunnylogo.com	45
Hollywood Entertainment	www.gamecrazy.com	110-111
Gillette Company	www.gillette.com	31
Hip Interactive Corp.	www.hipinteractive.com	71
Ignition USA	www.ignitionusa.com	95
Koei Corporation	www.koei.com	78-79
Konami Digital Entertainment	www.konami.com	33, 87, 90-91
LucasArts Entertainment	www.lucasarts.com	6-7
Majesco Games, Inc.	www.majescogames.com	41
Microsoft	www.microsoft.com	36-37
Midway Games, Inc.	www.midway.com	14-15, 57
Namco Hometek	www.namco.com	2-3, 24-25, 55
Office of National Drug Control Policy	www.whatsyourantidrug.com	73
Sega of America	www.espnvideogames.com	26-27
	www.sega.com	68-69
SCEA	www.scea.com	4-5, 39, 129
Sony Online Entertainment	www.sonyonline.com	43
Sony Pictures Classics	www.sonyclassics.com	117
Sony Pictures Entertainment	www.sonypictures.com	23
Square Enix, Inc.	www.square-enix-usa.com	119, 121, 123
Take 2 Interactive	www.take2games.com	35, 81
MonsterMob Group PLC	www.mob.tv	65
THQ, Inc.	www.thq.com	53, 89
Ubisoft Entertainment	www.ubisoft.com	8-9, 46-47, 60-61, 100-101
Unilever	www.unilever.com	63
U.S. Navy Recruiting Command	www.navy.com	83

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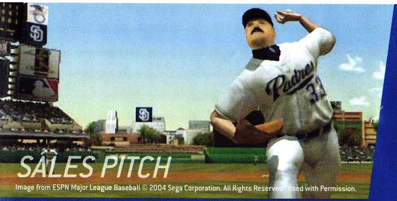

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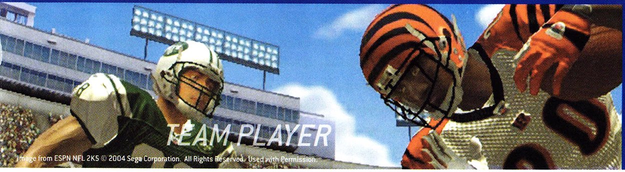

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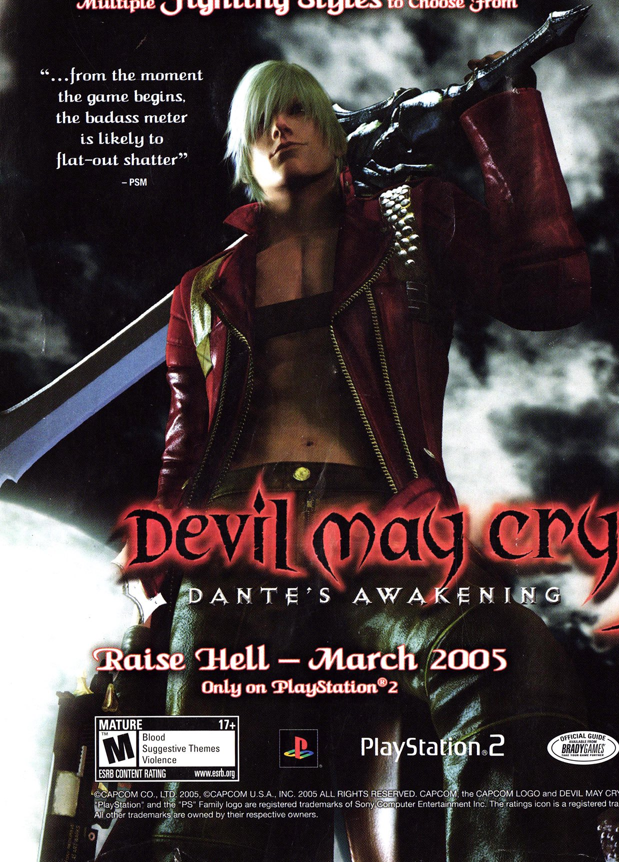

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